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"We walked out and I guarantee everyone, to a man, was thinking that this could be another special season"

ON JÜRGEN KLOPP'S STIRRING TEAM-TALK

"When the ball hit the net I would have given anything to be in the away end – it felt like a title winning moment"

ON THE GAME THAT CHANGED EVERYTHING

Official Liverpool FC Monthly Magazine

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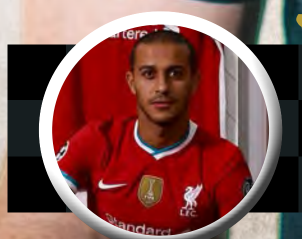
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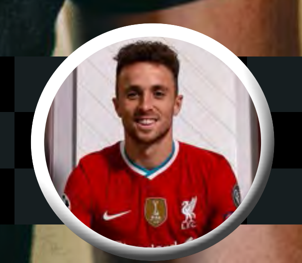
ROBBO

In his own words



THIAGO AND JOTA

The first big interviews




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Sadio can reign supreme again

At the time of this magazine going to print, Sadio Mane was self-isolating after testing positive for COVID-19, and everyone wishes him a speedy return to good health. The Senegalese ace had been in irresistible form at the start of the season, with the BBC's online match report for the Premier League home win over Arsenal marvelling at his "potent mixture of pace, work-rate and goal threat."




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Safety first, hopefully a way back soon

At the start of October the Premier League, FA and EFL jointly published an open letter to football supporters assuring all fans "that together we are fully committed to your safe return to football grounds as soon as possible [and] we are consulting with the Football Supporters' Association to keep supporters updated every step of the way." It continued: "We all know football is not the same without fans. Every player and manager is missing the direct connection with you and the impact that you have on our games… So, we will continue to urge the relevant authorities to let us, together, use innovative ways to bring fans safely back into football grounds."




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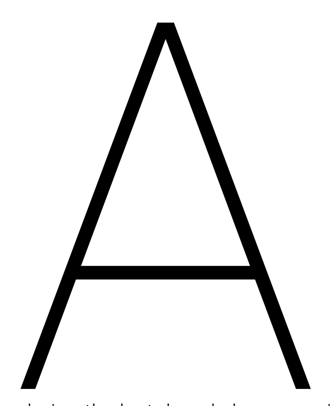


Words: Chris McLoughlin



THIAGO SILVER

Thiago Alcantara specialises in trophy-winning and aims to help add to this Liverpool's team list of triumphs



Announce Thiago. How many times did you see that posted on social media before Liverpool FC did indeed announce Thiago had signed for the club on the most exciting September the 18th in ages?

Loads, if you're on Twitter or Instagram. Because every Kopite who had seen Thiago Alcântara play for Barcelona, Bayern Munich and Spain during the last decade knew precisely what Jürgen Klopp and Michael Edwards would be bringing to Anfield if they could sign him.

Class. World-class. And there is no substitute for class, hence a very public outcry to sign him.

There's no substitute for winning silverware either, and that is precisely why the 29-year-old is now a Liverpool player. Playing for Liverpool means more and Thiago wants to win more.

His medal collection is already one of the most glittering in world football. Thiago has won nine league titles in the last 10 seasons; two La Liga crowns with Barcelona (2010/11, 2012/13) and seven Bundesliga titles with Bayern Munich from 2013/14 to 2019/20. And there's more. Much more.

He won the Champions League with Barcelona (as an unused substitute) against Manchester United at Wembley in 2011 and got his hands on the European Cup again in August 2020 as a pivotal member of the Barca side that beat Paris St Germain 1-0 in Lisbon. He had a pretty good game in Bayern's 8-2 semi-final win against former club Barcelona, too.

Then there's the Supercopa de Espana (2010, 2011), Copa del Rey (2012), UEFA Super Cup (2011) and FIFA Club World Cup (2011) he also won as a Barcelona player, plus another FIFA Club World Cup (2013), three DFB-Pokals (2016, 2019, 2020) and two DFL Supercups (2016, 2018) that he lifted with Bayern Munich.

Which takes Thiago's silverware haul to an astonishing 22 trophies between 2010 and 2020. And that's without mentioning he was a Under-17 European Championship winner with Spain in 2008 and a U21 European Championship winner in 2011 and 2013.

Now he wants to add to his bulging medal collection while wearing a Liverpool shirt.

"At the end, when the years are passing, you are trying to win as much as you can – and when you win, you want to win more," he said when asked by LFCTV why he'd left the German champions to join the English champions.

"I think this club describes what I am as well: I want to achieve all of the goals, win as many trophies as possible. It also [has] this kind of family that I need because we have a very close relationship with the club and I think I will feel this, I will have this feeling, with this club as well.

"I was with Bayern for seven years and from the first day until the last day, I was amazed with the club, with the people there, with the city. It was really difficult to leave the city, but in the end I was moving to here so the decision was clear. At the same time, it was hard."

Thiago played for Bayern against Liverpool at Anfield in the Champions League last 16 in 2019. He took 80 touches that night whereas his direct opponent, Jordan Henderson, took 81. It finished goalless as the pair, and both teams, cancelled each other out.

"We didn't plan to defend as much as we defended because we hated just to defend a whole game," Thiago recalls. "But they were stronger than us and we had to adapt.

"At that time I didn't think much about, 'Wow I am going to be there...I want to be there'. I just faced it like another important game."

It wasn't his first visit to Anfield, either. Not many seven-year-olds have done a European away at Anfield, but Thiago has. Not that we care to remember the result too fondly.

"The first time I was here when I was five or six years old, I think. My dad played against Liverpool with Celta Vigo. I think it was, at that time, it was the UEFA Cup [in December 1998]."

Thiago's dad is former Brazilian international midfielder Mazinho. Capped 35 times by his country, he won the Copa America in 1989 and the World Cup at USA 94, where he famously celebrated Bebeto's quarter-final goal against the Netherlands by standing between him and Romario as they rocked their arms to mimic a cradle.

I THINK THIS CLUB DESCRIBES WHAT I AM AS WELL: I WANT TO ACHIEVE ALL OF THE GOALS, WIN AS MANY TROPHIES AS POSSIBLE



He also got booked four minutes into the World Cup final for a tasty tackle on Italy's Nicola Berti but didn't take a penalty in the shoot-out made famous for Roberto Baggio's decisive miss.

While Bebeto's son had been born two days before that memorable goal celebration, Mazinho's eldest son Thiago was born in April 1991 in San Pietro Vernotico, Italy. His youngest son and Thiago's brother Rafinha – the Barcelona midfielder currently on loan at PSG – was born in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

Mazinho was playing for Lecce (1990-91) and Palmeiras (1992-1994) respectively when his children were born, but by November 1998 he was in Spain with Celta Vigo, who drew Liverpool in the third round of the UEFA Cup.

After coming from behind to beat the Reds 3-1 in Spain's far northwest, Mazinho was part of the Celta team that also defeated Liverpool 1-0 at Anfield. A teenager called Steven Gerrard made his first start for the Redmen at Anfield that night and was named





Dad in action at Anfield back in 1998



WHENEVER I PLAY, I FORGET EVERYTHING AROUND ME AND EVEN MYSELF. I NEED FOOTBALL AROUND ME. I WANT TO BE A PLAYER PEOPLE WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER. A PLAYER THAT THE PEOPLE RECOGNISE AS SOMEONE WHO ENTERTAINS THEM

as Carlsberg man-of-the-match. Whatever happened to him?

Seven-year-old Thiago, watching on from the stands, was already playing football himself by then, beginning with a club called Ureca (originally founded for employees of a local bank) before moving to Kelme CF when Mazinho signed for Elche in 2000.

At the age of 11, with the family back in Brazil after his dad moved to Salvador-based Vitoria to finish his career, Thiago gave his first interview. "I just want to be a footballer," he said.

Mum Valeria, herself a former Brazilian volleyball player, revealed that Thiago would kick a ball around at every available opportunity.

"Back then, when they'd come home from the field, Thiago would put shoes out all over the floor and dribble around them with an indoor ball as though they were cones," she told ESPN Brazil. "All he wanted to do is copy his dad, who is his hero."

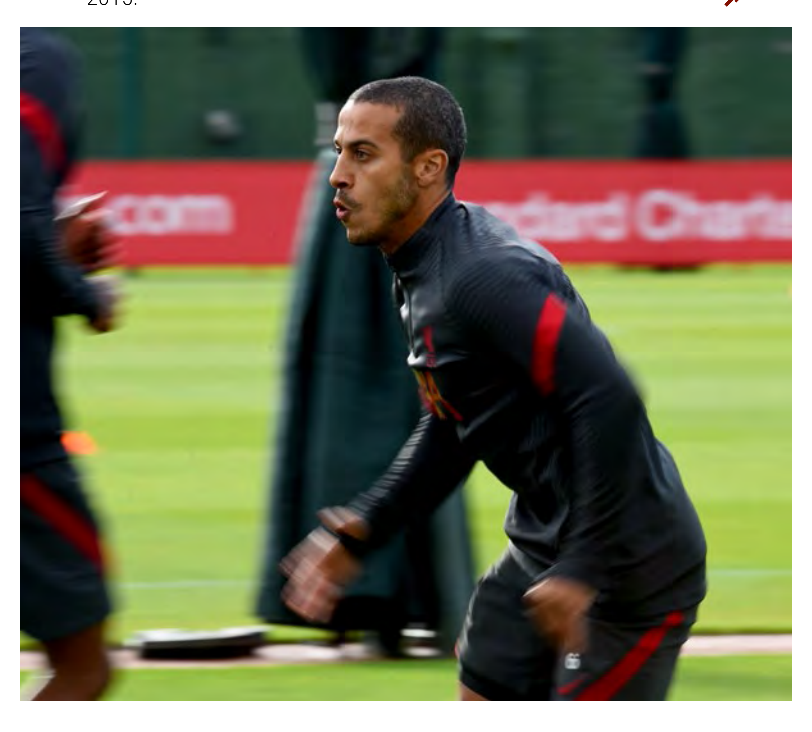
Barcelona gave Thiago the opportunity to become a football hero himself. He joined their esteemed La Masia academy in 2005 at the age of 14 and was handed his first team debut by Pep Guardiola in May 2009 aged 19.

"Football is what makes me happy," he said in 2011. "Whenever I play, I forget everything around me and even myself. I need football around me. I want to be a player people will always remember. A player that the people recognise as someone who entertains them."

He went on to make 101 first-team appearances for Barca, scoring 11 goals, before Guardiola insisted on taking him to Germany after being appointed as boss of Bayern Munich.

"He is the only player I want, it'll be him or no one," Guardiola told the German press before getting his man in July 2013. Five months later Thiago was netting his first Bayern goal against Morocco's Raja Casablanca as FCB won the FIFA Club World Cup final 2-0 in Marrakesh.

As Thiago's medal collection testifies, he was an unqualified success at the Allianz Arena, although there were setbacks. In March 2014, not long after setting a new Bundesliga record for touching the ball 185 times in a 4-0 win against Hannover 96, Thiago tore knee ligaments. It ruled him out of action until April 2015.








L.F.C.



Since then, with the exception of missing three months through another muscle injury in 2017/18, he's been the midfield fulcrum of a hugely successful era for Bayern. He scored 31 goals in 235 games for the six times European champions and created many more.

Capable of playing both as a no6 – a la his Liverpool shirt number – or further forward, his ability to pass the ball quickly, pick holes in defences and run a game like the conductor of an orchestra is world-renowned. It didn't take long for him to show Kopites what he can do.

Thiago made 75 passes – the most ever recorded in a Premier League game by a player who only appeared for 45 minutes – after coming on at half-time to make his Liverpool debut in the 2-0 win at Chelsea. Never mind announcing Thiago, that was Thiago announcing himself.

He did concede a penalty – which was brilliantly saved by Alisson – during that victory and isn't afraid to put a tackle in, as the 52 yellow cards he's been shown for club and country show, but being able to compete physically is a necessity to play in central midfield in English football.

Only an untimely bout of coronavirus has prevented Thaigo from playing since and it also ruled the midfield playmaker out of adding to his 39 caps for Spain during the international break. Not that his dad wanted him to play for Spain in the first place!

"I did everything possible for him to play for Brazil," Mazinho told the *Globo Esporte* news site. "It's logical that he's divided. I spent my whole career in the Brazilian team, I was a world champion. I made a mighty effort for him to have that chance. It didn't happen but I'm happy for the kid, his objective was this [playing for Spain]."



IT DIDN'T TAKE LONG FOR THIAGO TO SHOW LIVERPOOL FANS WHAT HE COULD DO. AGAINST CHELSEA AS A SUBSTITUTE HIS 75 PASSES WERE THE MOST EVER RECORDED IN A PREMIER LEAGUE GAME BY A PLAYER WHO ONLY APPEARED FOR 45 MINUTES IN A SINGLE MATCH



Having grown up in the country, it was clearly always a target for Thiago. Now he has his sights set on success as a Liverpool player over the next four years.

"I am excited not just to play here but also to train with my team-mates, to get to know the coach and what he wants, how the team plays. I want to help the guys. If I can help them to be even better than they are, and I can be better than I am, it would be so nice and I hope for that.

"First off, for sure, I think I must adapt to the team as fast as I can in the situation and the context that we are living right now. Everything is more compact and we started a little bit later, but still it is football and I think we have to mix all the big things up, all the good things we have.

"I will help the team in a defensive and offensive way and also in a mental aspect.

"As I said, when you win you want to win more. I want this, if I want to win here, the first year and then second, third, fourth and the years I am here.

"It is not about saying words, it is about doing the things. I will give my heart on the field to my team-mates, the club and also to the fans."

IT IS NOT ABOUT SAYING WORDS, IT IS ABOUT DOING THE THINGS. I WILL GIVE MY HEART ON THE FIELD TO MY TEAM-MATES, THE CLUB AND ALSO TO THE FANS



Can't wait to play in front of our fans at Anfield

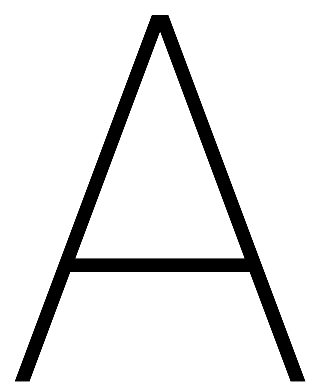

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YOU'LL NEVER WALK ALONE

GO DIOGO GO

The boss is excited by his arrival and what he can give to this Liverpool team, and so are the rest of us. Meet the force of nature that is Diogo Jota

Words: Chris McLoughlin


20



Alec Lindsay did it first in 1969. Daniel Sturridge did it most recently in 2013. And only four others – Sammy Lee, Jamie Redknapp, Michael Owen and Luis Suarez – did it in-between. Now you can add Diogo Jota's name to the list.

Jota's 88th-minute goal against Arsenal in September, to complete a 3-1 win at Anfield, made him just the seventh player to come on as a substitute and score on his league debut for Liverpool FC.

The fact that it was also the 400th Premier League goal scored by the Reds under Jürgen Klopp's management, in a new club record of just 185 Premier League games, added to the significance of an important moment for the former Wolves man.

Forwards will always be judged on goals and whereas it took Peter Crouch (1,229 minutes), Ian Rush (813 minutes), Dominic Solanke (690 minutes) and Robbie Keane (688 minutes) considerable amounts of time to break their Liverpool goalscoring ducks, Jota had been on the pitch for just eight minutes when netting with a low volley.

Add that on to the 33 minutes he'd played when coming on to make his debut in the 7-2 Carabao Cup win at Lincoln City – in which he almost scored – and the Portuguese international's first Liverpool goal came having played less than half-a-game for his new club.

"The first one is always the hardest one," he admitted. "Just to keep on going is always the most important but now I have one, I want more.

"It was an amazing feeling to get my first goal with this magnificent football club. It was like a dream coming true to score for the world champions. I just wish it could be with the full stadium, that would be even more special. But I was very pleased to help the team and seal the result. That was most important, the victory of course."

Born in Porto in December 1996, Jota isn't Diogo's actual name. He was named Diogo Jose Teixeira da Silva by his parents Andre and Isabel Silva, but was nicknamed 'Jota' as a kid.

IT WAS LIKE A DREAM COMING TRUE TO SCORE FOR THE WORLD CHAMPIONS



It stuck and he became known as Diogo Jota, although with Premier League rules banning the use of nicknames on shirts he has to wear 'DIOGO J' on his new no20 shirt with the J referring to his middle name of Jose. And in case you're wondering if 20 is a significant number to him...

"No, not really. Obviously coming here when the season is already underway is not always what we want, but I think it's a good number and hopefully I can do good things with it."

After joining a small Porto-based club called Gondomar when he was nine, Jota moved to Pacos de Ferreira – a football club in a city best known for being *Capital do Movel*, the Capital of Furniture – in





IN 2016/17 HE NETTED NINE GOALS FOR PORTO, THEN MANAGED BY NUNO ESPIRITO SANTO, AND HIS FIRST GOAL IN THE CHAMPIONS LEAGUE CAME IN A 5-0 WIN OVER LEICESTER CITY AT HOME IN THE ESTADIO DO DRAGAO

2013 to pursue a career in the game. It soon became clear that Pacos de Ferreira, who presumably play a flat-pack-four, had a talented young forward for fans to chair on.

Jota came on as a substitute, in a Portuguese Cup game against Atletico Riachense, to make his debut as a 17-year-old in November 2014. He scored in just four minutes in a 9-0 win and was soon helping his side climb the table, becoming the club's youngest-ever top-flight scorer when netting twice in a 3-2 Primeira Liga win against Academica at the age of 18 in May 2015.

He was a regular in 2015/16, scoring 12 times in 34 games to catch the eye of Atletico Madrid, for whom he signed in 2016. After a couple of months in the Spanish capital, he returned to Portugal on loan to FC Porto, where he played under manager Nuno Espirito Santo.

During the 2016/17 campaign, Jota netted nine goals for Porto in 37 appearances. His first Champions League goal came in a 5-0 win against Leicester City at Estadio do Dragao while he also netted in a 1-1 draw against Benfica, who had Manchester City's Ederson in goal and Manchester United's Victor Lindelof at centre-half.

However, with Porto failing to win any silverware that season, Espirito Santo was sacked in May 2017. He was out of work for nine days before ambitious Championship club Wolves appointed him as their new head coach. Less than two months later, Jota had followed him to Molineux on loan from *Atleti*.

"It is always a goal for me to play in England and this is a good opportunity," said the 20-year-old. "It will be a good experience for me. I will do a lot of running for sure and hopefully will score goals and provide assists." He was good to his word.

Jota finished season 2017/18 as leading scorer for the men in Old Gold with 18 strikes to his name as Wolves ran away with the second-tier title.

"I said in my first interview I want to contribute with assists and goals, because that's what my position requires," he said after receiving Wolves' Top Goalscorer award. "I know I can have a chance from a few yards or long yards, I have to take advantage from every chance I get to score.

"Fortunately, I was able to participate a good amount of goals."

Diogo completed a permanent move to Molineux that summer and the goals continued in the Premier League with his hat-trick in a 4-3 win against Leicester City in January 2019 – the first treble scored by a Wolves player in the competition and the first by a




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Portuguese player since Cristiano Ronaldo in 2008.

Season 2018/19 ended with Jota having netted 10 goals, nine of them in the Premier League, and last season his tally was even better. Diogo scored 16 times in 48 games, including a 12-minute hat-trick against Besiktas in the Europa League after coming on as a substitute. He also won his first cap for Portugal.

"He's a sensational footballer," said Wolves skipper and ex-Red Conor Coady. "It's not just his goals, it's his all-round play: the way he defends, his positional play, the way he links up players. He's an outstanding footballer."

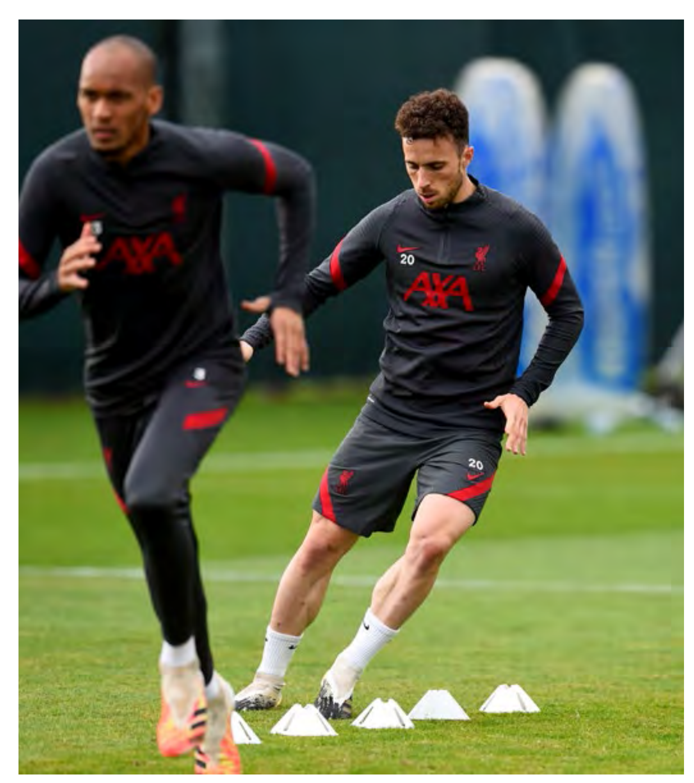
Another Europa League hat-trick followed in a 4-0 win against Espanyol in February, although travelling Kopites were grateful that Jota doesn't score with every shot when he missed a late chance to equalise during Liverpool's vital 2-1 Premier League win at Molineux a month earlier.

Even so, Jota clearly did enough in the four games in which he played against the Reds – and beyond – to convince Jürgen Klopp to bring him to Anfield with young defender Ki-Jana Hoever moving in the opposite direction on the same day.

"He's a player who gives us so many options to use him," said the Liverpool manager. "He's 23 years old, still far away from being kind of a finished article, so much potential. He has the speed, he can combine, can defend, can press.

"It makes it just more unpredictable and gives us real options for different systems because he can play pretty much all three positions upfront in a 4-3-3, if we play with four midfielders he can play both wings. So, these kinds of things.

HE'S A PLAYER WHO GIVES US SO MANY OPTIONS TO USE HIM






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"It's just nice. And he has some natural things which we have in our game, like this desire and the greed and the direction.

"He knows it's a step for him, he knows that. Of course it is. We always talk about these kinds of things: who can improve our team, the team who won pretty much everything last year? A lot of things can improve us, just if you want to come and play 500 games in a row then it could be slightly difficult.

"He knows it's a step for him and he can give us things we don't have – that's why it's cool. The space for improvement is not what I like most, but it's there. He is now already ready to play for us but yes, I'm pretty sure there's something to come. And the way we play, the way we train and the way we treat people, I think will help him as well."

Jota moved to Anfield with the blessing of Wolves boss Espirito Santo – "things happen when naturally they should happen, he's going to the right place" – and is now focusing on settling in to his new life with girlfriend Rute expecting a baby: "Being born here, he will be a Scouser!" he smiled when asked about it by LFCTV.

Naturally he also has targets to achieve on the pitch and already feels welcomed by his new team-mates and club staff.

"Obviously I have tried to [get to] know everybody from inside the dressing-room. We have a lot of staff as well to get to know. The way they received me is exceptional. I just thank them for the way they have received me. I think we can build up from here and do great things in the future.

WHEN YOU PLAY FOR LIVERPOOL PEOPLE EXPECT TO GET TITLES. THAT'S THE MAIN DIFFERENCE

"I want to be one more piece. I am here to help. I know they are a very strong team so they can count on me because I'm one more to help.

"When you play for Liverpool people expect to get titles. That's the main difference with this club, but it's football so at the end of everything it's still a matter of scoring goals and that's what I try to do always."

If scoring on his Liverpool league debut at Anfield is anything to go by, Diogo Jota will do just fine in a red shirt.





40 x 3

Mohamed Salah's hat-trick on the opening day of the season meant Liverpool become the first club to net 40 Premier League trebles, and here they all are

8 HAT-TRICKS

Robbie Fowler

6 home, 2 away

Southampton (H) 30 Oct 1993

Arsenal (H) 28 Aug 1994

Arsenal (H) 23 Dec 1995

Bolton (H) 23 Sept 1995 (4 goals)

Middlesbrough (H) 14 Dec 1996 (4 goals)

Aston Villa (A) 21 Nov 1998

Southampton (H) 16 Jan 1999

Leicester City (A) 20 Oct 2001







HAT-TRICKS

Michael Owen

3 home, 4 away

Sheffield Wed (A) 14 Feb 1998

Newcastle United (A) 30 Aug 1998

Nottm Forest (H) 24 Oct 1998 4 goals

Aston Villa (H) 6 Sept 2000

Newcastle United (H) 5 May 2001

Manchester City (A) 28 Sept 2002

West Brom (A) 26 April 2003 (4 goals)

HAT-TRICKS

Luis Suarez

2 home, 4 away

Norwich City (A) 28 April 2012

Norwich City (A) 29 Sept 2012

Wigan Athletic (A) 2 Mar 2013

West Brom (H) 26 Oct 2013

Norwich City (H) 4 Dec 2013 (4 goals)

Cardiff City (A) 22 Mar 2014

3

HAT-TRICKS

Mohamed Salah

2 home, 1 away

Watford (H) 17 Mar 2018

Bournemouth (A) 8 Dec 2018

Leeds United (H) 19 Sept 2020

HAT-TRICKS

Fernando Torres

3 home

Middlesbrough (H) 23 Feb 2008

West Ham (H) 5 Mar 2008

Hull City (H) 26 Sept 2009



HAT-TRICKS

Steven Gerrard

2 home

22.03.2009 v Aston Villa (H)

13.03.2012 v Everton (H)



Maxi Rodriguez

1 home, 1 away

23.04.2011 v Birmingham City (H)

09.05.2011 v Fulham (A)

HAT-TRICK



Roberto Firmino v Arsenal (H) 29 Dec 2018

Daniel Sturridge v Fulham (A) 12 May 2013

Yossi Benayoun v Burnley (H) 12 Sept 2009

Dirk Kuyt v Man United (H) 6 Mar 2011

Peter Crouch v Arsenal (H) 31 Mar 2007

Milan Baros v Crystal Palace (H) 13 Nov 2004

Emile Heskey v Derby County (A) 15 Oct 2000

Patrik Berger v Chelsea (H) 5 Oct 1997

Mark Walters v Coventry City (H) 17 Apr 1993



Most Premier League hat-tricks

40 Liverpool

39 Arsenal

33 Manchester United

27 Manchester City

26 Chelsea



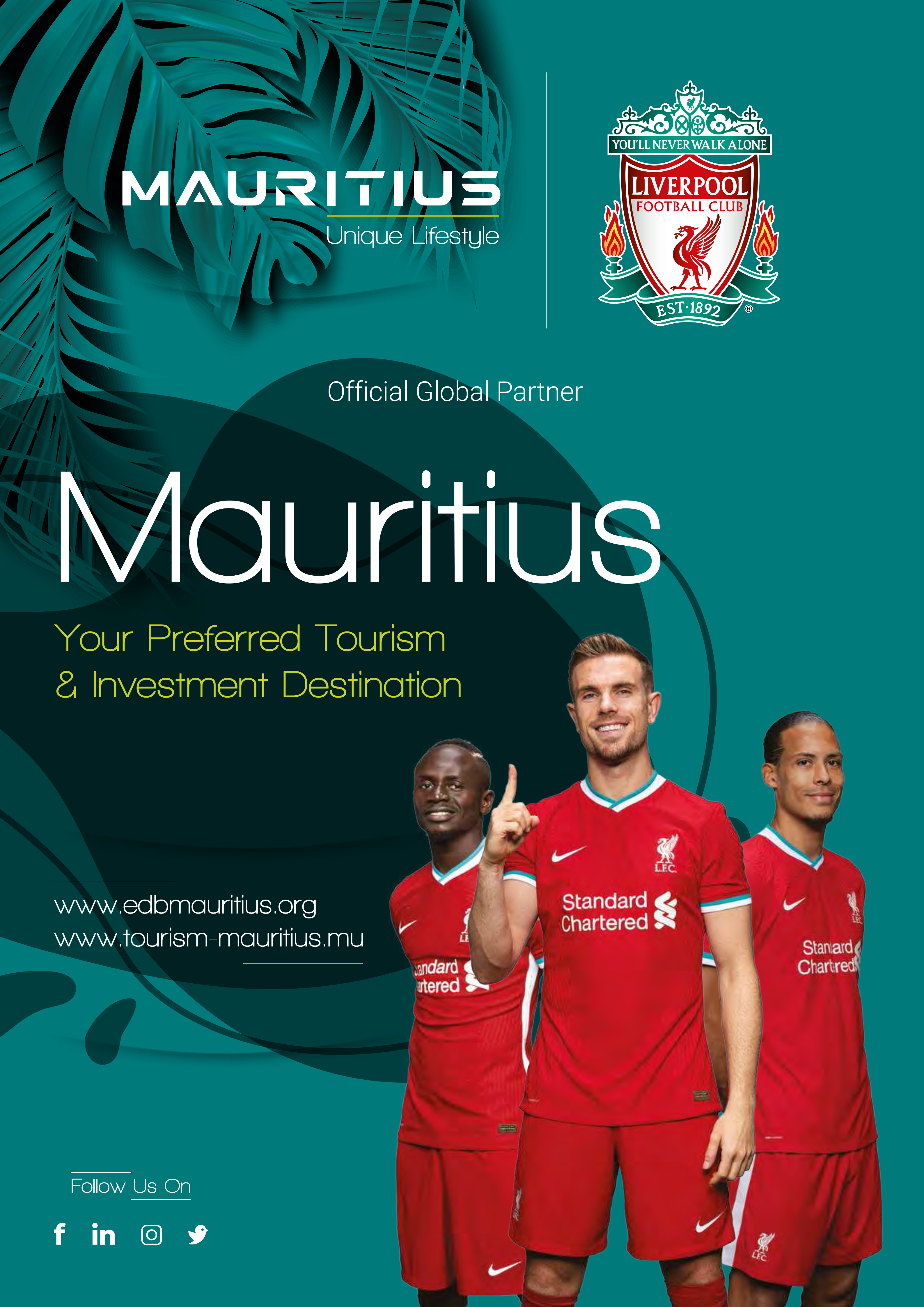
THE BEST MEDICINE

Still in a mild state of shell-shock following a certain away result in the West Midlands? Best thing for it: take it on the chin and see the funny side, like the Reds fan on Twitter who posted this: "My missus just woke me up and said 'Get up, babe, it's eight'. "I said, '****! Have Villa scored again?'" And secondly, simply feast your eyes on this little cutie currently residing in the Anfield trophy cabinet. Still ours. We won it. Liverpool are the reigning Premier League champions. Great, isn't it?



IS RIGHT, SKIPPPER

Talking of which, here's a gratuitous shot of the captain in front of his Premier League trophy-raising mural around the corner from the ground. Not that the message on the wall behind Jordan Henderson needs reinforcing. If there's one thing we all do under this manager's leadership – players, fans, coaching staff – it's keep the faith.



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TRENT'S TROPHY

The Reds full-back has been honoured for his incredible individual performances throughout the title-winning season



Words: William Hughes

Trent Alexander-Arnold became the fifth Liverpool player to win the coveted PFA Young Player of the Year award when he collected the 2019/20 honour ahead of the new campaign.

The England right-back featured in every Premier League game as Liverpool were crowned champions last season and he received the prestigious individual honour after winning a vote of his fellow professionals across the country.

He was the first Red since midfield marvel Steven Gerrard in 2000/01 to claim the accolade and also follows in the footsteps of prolific marksmen Ian Rush, Robbie Fowler (twice) and Michael Owen.

He emerged as the winner from a shortlist that also included Chelsea duo Tammy Abraham and Mason Mount, Manchester United pair Marcus Rashford and Mason Greenwood plus Arsenal's Bukayo Saka.

"Being a part of the names that I've seen on here, and to be a part of such an amazing trophy and be able to receive it, is an unbelievable honour for me and my family – it's something we'll always be proud of," said the 21-year-old.

"These types of awards, when it's voted by people who have played against you and can maybe admire or respect the things you do on the pitch, is amazing.

"It's a big thanks to all those that voted for me and have decided I deserve this trophy. It's a big thanks to them. It's huge for me to achieve this and it's something I'll never forget."

Alexander-Arnold scored four goals and provided 13 assists in the top-flight as Liverpool surged to the championship with a club-record 99 points. His tally of assists set a new benchmark for a defender during a single Premier League season, bettering his own record of 12 set in the previous campaign.

The marauding full-back's memorable season also saw him help his boyhood club lift the UEFA Super Cup and a first FIFA Club World Cup in 2019 before the domestic title was clinched in the summer.



Trent also won the Premier League's Young Player of the Season award and he was nominated for the top-flight's Player of the Season and PFA Players' Player of the Year honours. He was one of five Reds named in the 2019/20 Premier League Team of the Year.

"Obviously first off I've got to say thanks to my friends and family, everyone who has helped me achieve this and to get to this point so far," said the Reds Academy graduate.

"Without them I wouldn't be able to be here. They are the ones that see me after we get beat and they're the ones that help me put those games behind me and keep focused and keep going. I've got to give thanks to them.

"Everyone at the Academy for the 10 to 12 years that I was down there, who taught me everything I know really and helped me along the way.

"I spent the majority of my career and my youth life at the Academy, day in and day out. It's thanks to those people who moulded me into the person I am today.

"The staff and the manager and the people who have given me the opportunities to achieve things.

"Without those opportunities nobody can achieve anything, so I've got to give thanks to the staff and especially the manager for that.

"And obviously my team-mates – without them none of this would be possible. The things we've achieved as a team are unbelievable. Hopefully there'll be many more moments like this."

WHAT **THEY** SAY

"I think [he] is one of the best in the world, no doubt about it. I would say he has the same characteristics as I did. I think he has what it takes to become a Ballon D'Or winner."

Legendary Brazil right-back Cafu

"What Trent has done is take it [full-back play] to a new level. It's his mobility, his passing ability, his pace. His service from wide areas is fabulous. He gets his head up to have a look, and if on the odd occasion he doesn't have time to do that, he'll deliver right into the corridor of uncertainty."

Former defender Mark Lawrenson



"Liverpool fans are thrilled and delighted with Trent and Andy Robertson. They are as good at their jobs as any other full-backs in football right now. I can't praise them higher than that. Both are an integral part of what Jürgen Klopp asks his team to do, and deliver on a consistent basis."

Sir Kenny Dalglish

"Trent think it's absolutely easy! He just turns up and wins trophies every year! But I can assure you, with the amount of years I've had in my career, it's not that easy."

Vice-captain James Milner

"I've not seen something like him since Cafu. He's out of this world. The quality he produces is out of this world."

Sky Sports pundit Gary Neville



LFC'S PFA YOUNG PLAYER OF THE YEAR WINNERS



1982/83 Ian Rush



1994/95 Robbie Fowler

1995/96 Robbie Fowler



1997/98 Michael Owen



2000/01 Steven Gerrard



2019/20 Trent Alexander Arnold

"These last two seasons we've shown that we can take the numbers [of assists] to a whole new level for full-backs, especially with Trent breaking the record for a full-back that had stood for many years in 2018/19 and then breaking his own record the year after which was incredible. If I'm anywhere close to him this season then I think we'll have both had a successful season because I can't see him not assisting with goals and long may that continue."

Fellow full-back Andy Robertson

"As I'm playing in training, I'm watching him. I'm taking things in and taking stuff that he does into my game."

Team-mate Neco Williams



"Full-backs are pure athletes, almost 1,500m runners now, and they have to be the fittest in the team. He's the perfect player for this Liverpool side: young, quick and fundamental. He has the chance to define an era with his team."

Former Spain full-back Joan Capdevilla, speaking to *FourFourTwo* magazine

"I have known Trent since he was 17-years-old. He was a big talent but we were not sure he could do it physically. Now he is a machine."

Manager Jürgen Klopp



The personal thoughts of Klopp and Henderson as they led Liverpool to Premier League glory – captured in the matchday programme

NEW BOOKS

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Order online at **reachsportshop.com** and **store.liverpoolfc.com**

YOU'LL NEVER WALK OUR LOANS QUIZ

Tortuous header? Check. Terrifically difficult quiz? Double-check. Let's do this…

CURRENT CROP



1 Which third-tier club did James Milner join on loan from Leeds United in the 2003/04 season?

2 True or false: Fabinho played with Monaco on loan before joining them on a permanent basis…

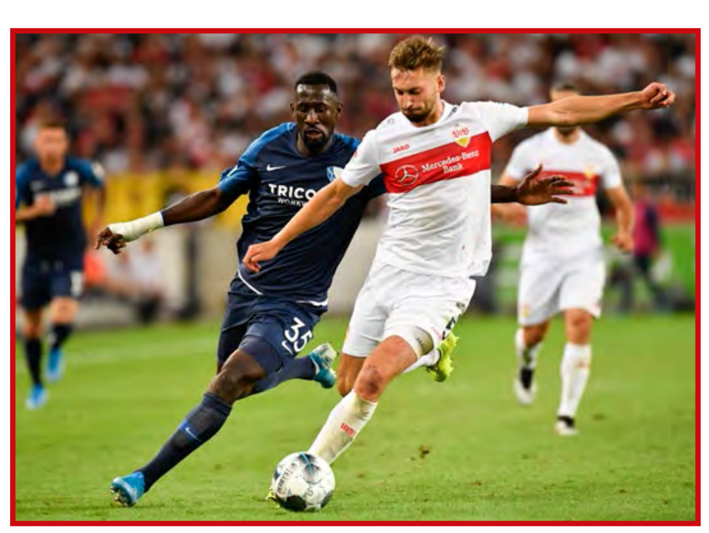
3 Name the two Italian clubs to whom Mohamed Salah was loaned while on the books of Chelsea?

4 How many Championship goals did Rhian Brewster net in his 20 games for Swansea City last season?

5 And which Welsh club did Marko Grujic join on loan in January 2018?

6 Can you name the Danish side at whom Kostas Tsimikas spent time on loan?

7 Which German club did Nat Phillips (below) help win promotion to the Bundesliga last season?



8 With which club did Jordan Henderson, then a Sunderland player, spend the second half of the 2008/09 campaign?

9 Divock Origi has spent time on loan in France and Germany since joining the Reds in 2014 – with which two clubs?

10 Harry Wilson has been loaned out to four English clubs – can you name them?

TEAM BEHIND THE TEAM

11. Who is the only player to have been loaned to Liverpool under the management of Jürgen Klopp?

12. Under-23s assistant manager Gary O'Neil had loan-spells with two clubs during his spell at Portsmouth – can you name them?

13. True or false: under-18s boss Marc Bridge-Wilkinson (right) had loans at Carlisle, Bradford City and Darlington and later went on to join all three on a permanent basis…

14. Michael Thomas is coaching at LFC's Academy but which club did he join on loan before leaving Liverpool?

15. True or false: Jürgen Klopp once had a loan-spell at Eintracht Frankfurt…

16. What is the name of LFC's loans manager?

17. Which former Reds manager once had a loan-spell during his playing days at Spanish side AD Parla?

18. Can you name the American side with whom Roy Evans had a loan-spell in 1973?

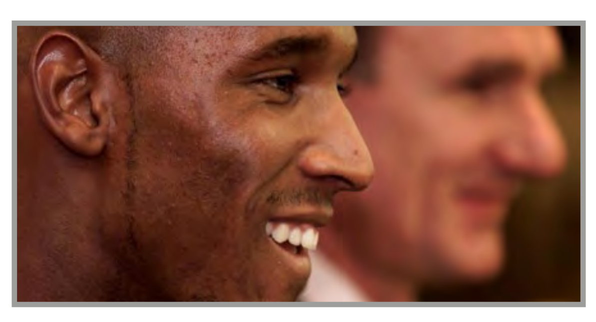
19. In the early stages of his playing career Graeme Souness had loan-spells in which two countries?

20. Academy director Alex Inglethorpe (right) played over 100 games for Leyton Orient but also spent time on loan at which other London club in 1995?

INCOMING

21. How many players joined Liverpool on loan during the 1980s?

22. Nicolas Anelka (below) joined the Reds on loan from which club in December 2001?





23. Liverpool signed which goalkeeper on a month's loan from Crewe Alexandra in February 1994?

24. And which Reds boss signed goalkeeper Paul Jones (above) on a temporary basis in January 2004?

25. Keeper Danielle Padelli, who joined on loan from Sampdoria in January 2007, started one Premier League game at Anfield – against which club?

26. Which midfielder joined the Reds in loan from Real Madrid in August 2012 before joining Jürgen Klopp's Dortmund initially on a temporary basis?

27. Brendan Rodgers brought in winger Victor Moses (right) on a season-long loan from Chelsea for the 2013/14 campaign – he scored on his debut against which club?

28. Left-back Aly Cissokho also joined on loan that season – which club does he play for now?



29. Full-back Javier Manquillo (right) signed for the 2014/15 campaign on a temporary basis from which club?

30. Argentinian midfielder Javier Mascherano originally joined on loan from West Ham in 2007 – against which club did he net his only Premier League goal for the Reds?

EX-REDS

31. Liverpool loaned goalkeeper Chris Kirkland to which two clubs before he left Anfield on a permanent basis?

32. Mark Gonzalez (right) left on loan to Real Sociedad in 2005/06 but for which country did he play his international football?

33. Which hirsute striker joined Hertha Berlin on loan for the 2008/09 season?

34. Can you name the future Spanish international centre-back whom the Reds loaned to Athletic Bilbao in 2009/10 before making the move permanent?

35. Peter Gulacsi helped RB Leipzig to the Champions League semi-finals last season but to which club was he loaned by the Reds in September 2010?

36. How many major trophies did Philippe Coutinho win on loan at Bayern Munich last season?

37. While with the Reds, new England cap Conor Coady had a loan-spell at which then League One side?

38. Pepe Reina joined which Italian club on loan in 2013/14 before leaving Liverpool on a permanent basis?

39. Current Sevilla midfielder Suso was loaned by the Reds to which Spanish side for the 2013/14 campaign?

40. Which striker did the Reds loan to AC Milan for the 2015/16 season?

41. Liverpool loaned Lazar Markovic (right) to four clubs before he joined Fulham on a free transfer last year – can you name them?

42. Nathaniel Clyne was loaned to which fellow Premier League club in 2019?

43. Iago Aspas is now starring with Celta Vigo but to which other Spanish club did Liverpool loan him for the 2014/15 campaign?

44. To which Scottish club did Jürgen Klopp loan Adam Bogdan in 2018/19 before he joined them permanently?

45. And which Scottish side did keeper Danny Ward join for the 2015/16 campaign?

46. Which Spaniard did the Reds loan to Malaga in 2014/15 and Deportivo La Coruna in 2015/16?

47. Which former Paris Saint-Germain captain was sent out on loan to Crystal Palace in 2017?

48. Can you name the Liverpool striker who spent the second half of the 2017/18 season at West Brom?

49. Pedro Chirivella had three loan-spells while with the Reds – which French Ligue 1 club did he sign for this summer?



50. For which two Lancashire clubs did Jon Flanagan (right) play on loan before joining Rangers on a permanent basis?

ANSWERS

CURRENT CROP 1. Swindon Town; 2. True; 3. Fiorentina and Roma; 4. Ten; 5. Cardiff City; 6. Esbjerg; 7. VfB Stuttgart; 8. Coventry City; 9. Lille and VfL Wolfsburg; 10. Crewe Alexandra, Hull City, Derby County and AFC Bournemouth.

TEAM BEHIND THE TEAM 11. Steven Caulker; 12. Walsall and Cardiff City; 13. True; 14. Middlesbrough; 15. False; 16. Julian Ward; 17. Rafael Benitez; 18. Philadelphia Atoms; 19. Canada (Montreal Olympique) and Australia (West Adelaide); 20. Barnet.

INCOMING 21. One - Ian Rush in 1986/87 from Juventus; 22. Paris St Germain; 23. Mark Gayle; 24. Gerard Houllier; 25. Charlton Athletic; 26. Nuri Sahin; 27. Swansea City; 28. Antalyaspor; 29. Atletico Madrid; 30. Reading.

EX-REDS 31. West Brom and Wigan; 32. Chile; 33. Andriy Voronin; 34. Mikel San Jose; 35. Tranmere Rovers; 36. Three; 37. Sheffield United; 38. Napoli; 39. Almeria; 40. Mario Balotelli; 41. Fenerbahce, Sporting Lisbon, Hull City and Anderlecht; 42. AFC Bournemouth; 43. Sevilla; 44. Hibernian; 45. Aberdeen; 46. Luis Alberto; 47. Mamadou Sakho; 48. Daniel Sturridge; 49. Nantes; 50. Burnley and Bolton Wanderers.

HOW DID YOU SCORE?

0-20 We'll be looking to farm you out on a permanent basis!
21-30 Reasonable performance but areas for improvement.
31-40 Excellent display – your parent club will have taken note.
41-50 Wow – you'll be back in the first-team squad next season!

"It's no exaggeration to say the hairs on the back of my neck were standing up as the boss spoke"

Andy Robbo, in his own words. As endorsed by the gaffer and the skipper, among many others. It's the book that every Liverpool fan – make that football fan – should read, and here's just a sample of what's inside

You may have heard that Andy Robertson has a book out, and that it's an absolute belter. You heard right.

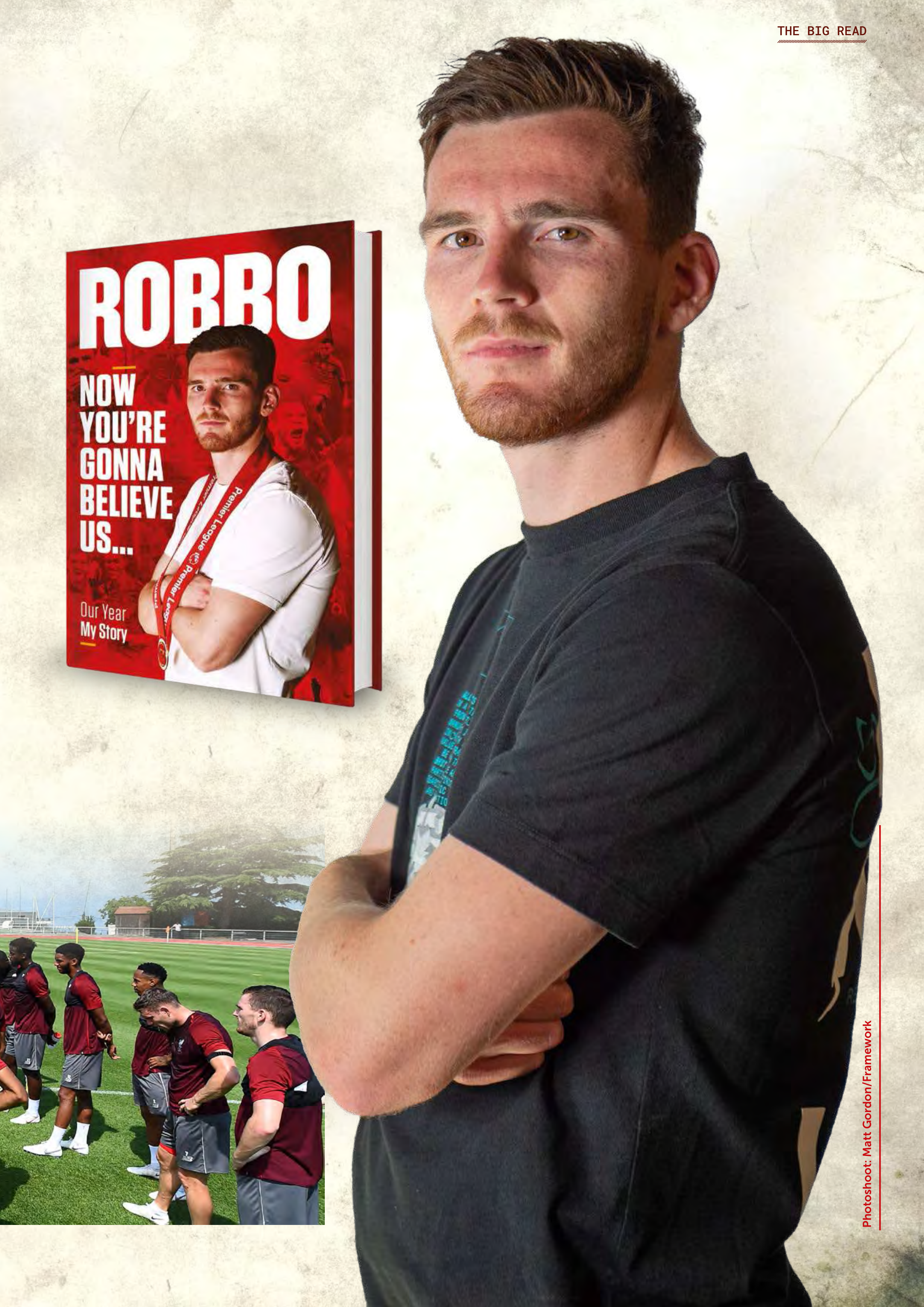
Robbo – Now You're Gonna Believe Us tells the inside story of Liverpool's 2019/20 Premier League winning season. It's an insightful, eventful and often hilarious read as the Reds left-back shares WhatsApp messages he exchanged with team-mates, explains how Jürgen Klopp's psychology shaped the season and makes some startling revelations – such as how a spider put him in hospital and why some Liverpool players got off a flight home after the 1-0 win at Norwich.

He also takes readers behind the scenes of the title celebrations, reveals why Virgil van Dijk was desperate to win the FIFA Club World Cup and what it's like to party with Sir Kenny Dalglish!

Now Andy has kindly allowed us to publish a couple of exclusive extracts for readers of the club's official magazine.

The first passage focuses on how a rousing pre-season speech from the boss gave his players the hunger to become serial winners, and the second is all about the incredible late comeback at Aston Villa in the Premier League where Robbo might just mention scoring a goal with his head…





Photoshoot: Matt Gordon/Framework

FORGET WHAT HAPPENED THE SEASON BEFORE, SAID THE BOSS, AND LET'S BECOME SERIAL WINNERS

I know a lot of people believe that, as a squad, we resolved to win the league the season after we lifted the European Cup. Apart from the individual messages that we shared with one another, it wasn't really like that as a group. I think we might have all had that feeling but nobody was vocal about it.

When you get that feeling of being a champion, you want it a lot more, whether that be the league or the FA Cup or whatever. But I don't think straight after Madrid we were all saying to each other 'next season, Premier League'. We were the champions of Europe and stayed in that bubble rather than thinking about losing the league or how close we had come.

Our focus shifted during pre-season, though, and it wasn't just a case of saying so either, there was a definite change of demeanour. From the manager downwards, there was an extra determination to scratch the itch that was bugging all of us and to do whatever it would take, even if that meant being pushed to the very brink.

That message was reinforced in word and deed while we were in Evian [in pre-season], most powerfully of all during a team meeting. Up to that point, the gaffer had been comparatively relaxed; the players had been coming back at different times and there had definitely been a sense that the second phase of pre-season would be a different level to the first.

So when he stood in front of us all in a small meeting room on the ground floor of the hotel, it quickly became clear to all of us that the gaffer saw this as his opportunity to really set out his stall for the season. For me, this is where he really comes into his own because I don't think I've come across many people in any walk of life who are better able not just to sense the mood, but to take advantage of it.

"In twenty, thirty, forty years from now, everyone will know that we were Champions League winners in 2019," he said. "That is in the record books and nobody can take that away from us. In Madrid we made it six times for this wonderful club and that is a fantastic achievement but now we want more.

"We want to be Premier League winners for the first time, we want to be European Cup winners for the seventh time. As a group, we want to keep on winning." It's no exaggeration to say the hairs on the back of my neck were standing up as he spoke.



For the gaffer this wasn't about taking the memories away from us, it was about keeping them with us and using them for inspiration going forward. He wanted us to keep the images of Madrid in our heads as a constant reminder of what we had achieved and what we want to achieve again, but there was also a dividing line – that was then and this is now. Basically, he was creating a hunger in us to become serial winners.

The other message was that we were going to need to stick together more than ever and that we had to have the kind of unity which means that, if you cut one of us, we all bleed.

He said: "One of the problems that we are going to face is that we only lost one game last season and we still fell short. If we





"I WOULD SAY WITHOUT HESITATION THAT IT WAS ONE OF THE BEST TEAM MEETINGS I'VE BEEN IN. I LITERALLY COULD HAVE STARTED THE SEASON THAT NIGHT. WE WALKED OUT AND EVERYONE, TO A MAN, WAS THINKING THIS COULD BE ANOTHER SPECIAL SEASON"

lose one or two in the first ten games or so there will be pressure from outside, but we have to recognise that we won't be in a bad position. Every season is different. We need to forget what happened last season and not use it as a constant comparison."

I would say without hesitation that this was one of the best team meetings I've been in. I literally could have started the season that night. We walked out and I guarantee everyone, to a man, was thinking that this could be another special season – maybe even more special than the one before.

Over the course of a day in a French hotel, our minds had not only accepted the challenge ahead, they had embraced it.

Psychologically, we could not have been in a better place.

I WOULD HAVE GIVEN ANYTHING TO BE IN THE AWAY END AT VILLA PARK

At about 4.45pm, it looked like there would be a six-point swing in City's favour as they went 2-1 up with a late Kyle Walker goal. Not that we knew what was going on at the Etihad. We had enough on our plate at Villa Park.

Our ten-month unbeaten league run was on the line and so was the momentum which had built from the start of the season. Worst of all, we were at risk of having our advantage at the top wiped out altogether.

Then, out of nowhere, the turning-point came and it couldn't have come from a more unexpected source – the head of Andrew Henry Robertson.

Up to that day, I'd done most things as a professional footballer. I had been relegated. I had won the Champions League. I had been released as a kid. I had been injured. I'd had good games and I'd had bad games.

One of the few things that was missing from my CV was a headed goal. That changed in an instant and so did the course of a game that had been getting away from us.

The finish itself wasn't anything special but the fact that I was attacking the six-yard box in open play so late in the game spoke volumes for both our growing desperation and our willingness to commit bodies forward from all positions.

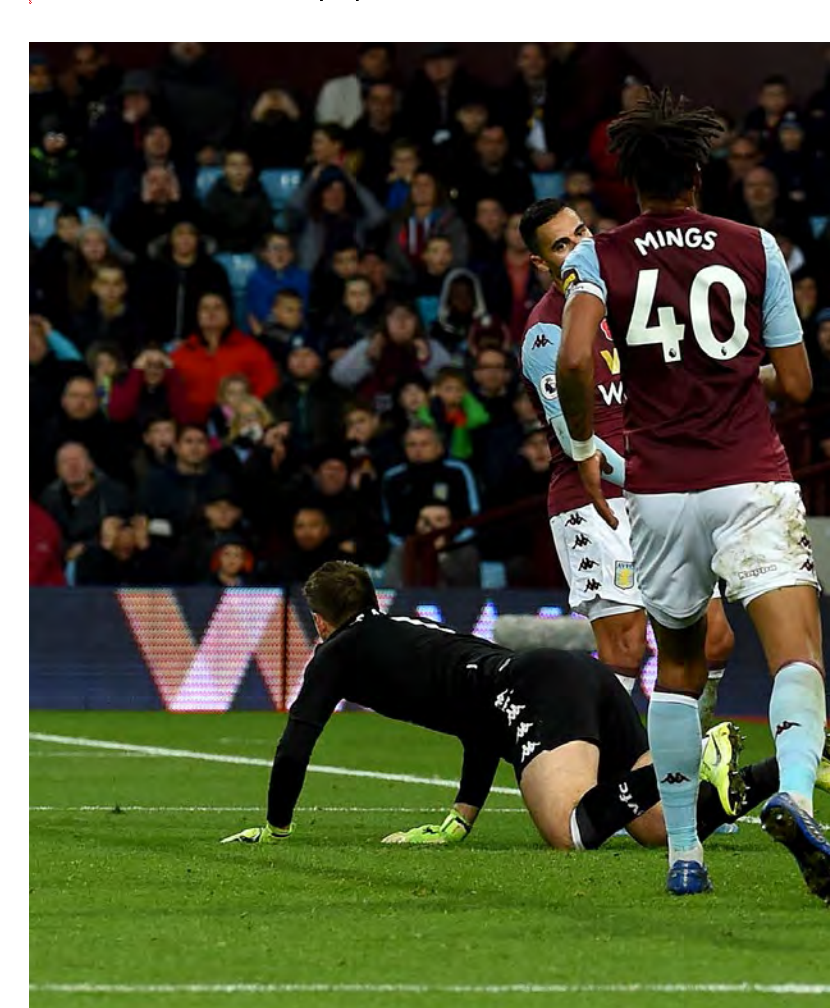
The ball in from Sadio couldn't have been better. It had a lovely in-swinging drift that allowed me to watch it all the way onto my head. All [goalkeeper] Tom Heaton could do was shuffle across his goal-line in the knowledge that if he came out, I would be getting there before him.

The funny thing was that even though I hadn't scored a header before then, I knew I was scoring before I made any kind of contact with the ball. I couldn't explain why that was the case, it was just an incredible feeling of inevitability and that was followed by a sense of indescribable euphoria when the ball crashed into the net.

A bad defeat had suddenly been transformed into a decent point. But we didn't see it that way. We wanted more.

I sprinted away from their goal, leaving someone else to retrieve the ball which deserves to be a collectors' item given what had just happened, and headed back to the halfway line.

The most natural thing in the world would have been to race to the away end at the side of our goal because absolute bedlam had just broken out but, for once, we had to leave our fans to get on with it without us. From where I was, it didn't look like they needed any help with their celebrations anyway.

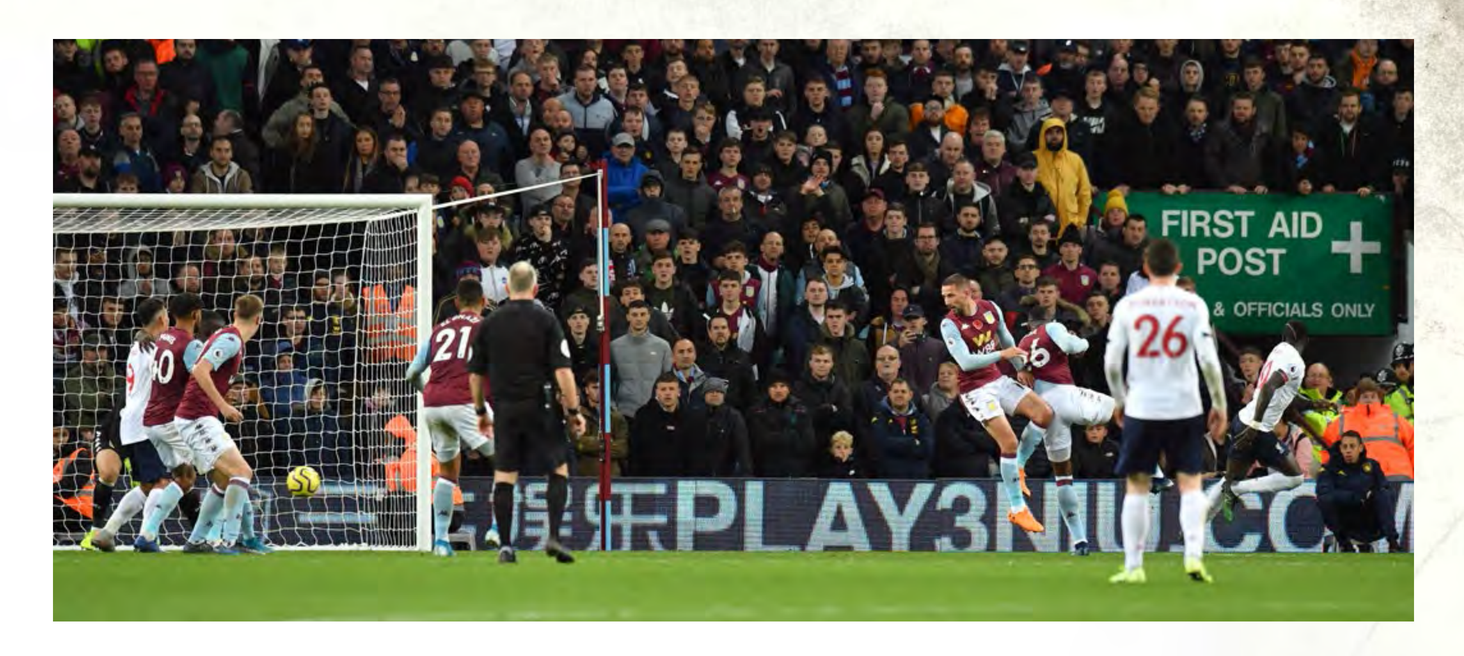


"THE FUNNY THING WAS THAT EVEN THOUGH I HADN'T SCORED A HEADER BEFORE THEN, I KNEW I WAS SCORING BEFORE I MADE ANY KIND OF CONTACT WITH THE BALL. I COULDN'T EXPLAIN WHY THAT WAS THE CASE, IT WAS JUST AN INCREDIBLE FEELING OF INEVITABILITY AND THAT WAS FOLLOWED BY A SENSE OF INDESCRIBABLE EUPHORIA WHEN THE BALL CRASHED INTO THE NET"

While the supporters were doing their job, we had a heightened desire to do ours to the absolute maximum. At the moment when the game re-started, I can tell you exactly what every single Liverpool player was thinking – go and win it.

It was that collectivism that had brought us back into the game and now it was fuelling our desire to turn defeat into victory. At moments like that, you sense opportunity and you smell blood. All of a sudden, it felt like the pitch was on a slope and everyone on it was





drawn towards the Villa goal.

As we headed towards the last minute of stoppage-time, we were awarded a free-kick in a central area on the edge of the Villa box. It was perfect for a right-footer or a left-footer so the gaffer told Trent and myself to stand over it and put doubt in Tom Heaton's mind.

I sensed this was a certain goal, no matter who took it. That is what momentum does, it makes you feel unstoppable. In my head, I was whipping the ball over the wall and into the top corner before wheeling away to celebrate. Then I caught myself on and realised that I was stood next to one of the best free-kick takers around. 'Go on Trent,' I thought. 'Make yourself the hero'.

The Villa wall stood strong and his effort deflected for a corner. Trent didn't flicker. One of his greatest strengths is remaining calm and he just trotted over to take control of the set-piece.

It was the 94th minute and he was still thinking as lucidly as you would in the first. Despite the physical fatigue that everyone on the pitch was feeling, he was alert enough to recall something that had been highlighted in the pre-match analysis.

Villa would sometimes leave a gap at the near-post when defending corners and the feeling was that if we could get someone into that area we might be able to take advantage. It is the kind of situation that all teams look at before every game but to exploit it you need a lot of things to come together at once. The delivery has to be

"IN THE LAST MINUTE OF STOPPAGE TIME I SENSED THIS WAS A CERTAIN GOAL, NO MATTER WHO TOOK THE FREE-KICK. THAT IS WHAT MOMENTUM DOES, IT MAKES YOU FEEL UNSTOPPABLE"



JÜRGEN ON ROBBO'S BOOK

"Look what I have in my hands. This is a book from, and with, Robbo – the famous number 26 from Scotland. In my version there is a little personal note, so that's good. I probably will wait for the audio version or maybe this will be the first book I read in English which had nothing to do with football tactics – I hope, at least! It's about our journey in the last year. I didn't read it yet, but I will do it 100 per cent. And I was involved in some of the stories so I can tell you it was a pretty interesting year. So if I would not have it already I would buy it now!"



"FOR OUR SUPPORTERS, IT WASN'T JUST A LATE WINNER, IT FELT BIGGER THAN THAT. THAT'S WHY THEY WENT NUTS"





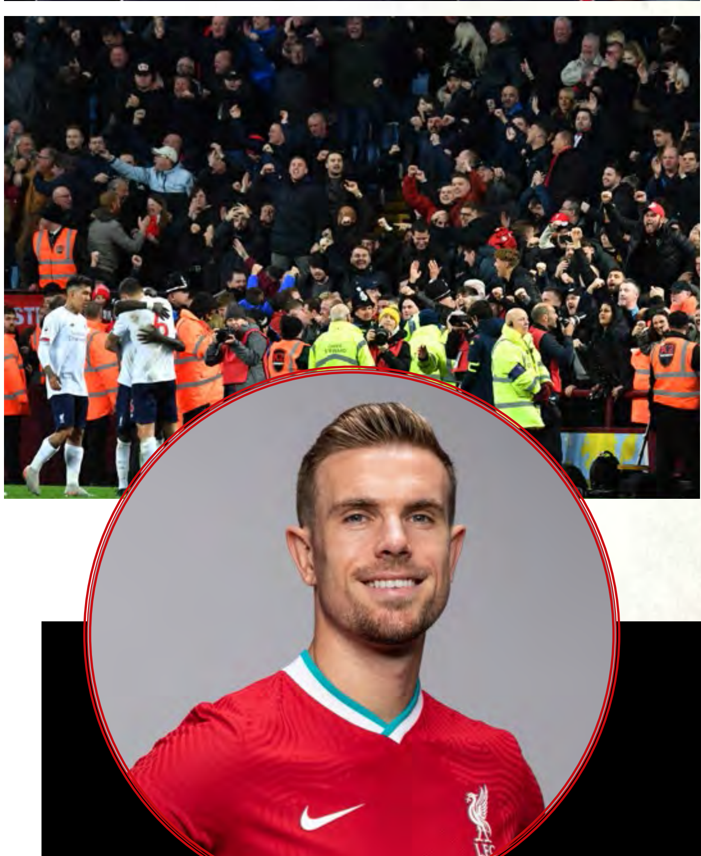
perfect, the opposition has to act in the way expected and you need a player to not only attack the ball but to have the quality to score.

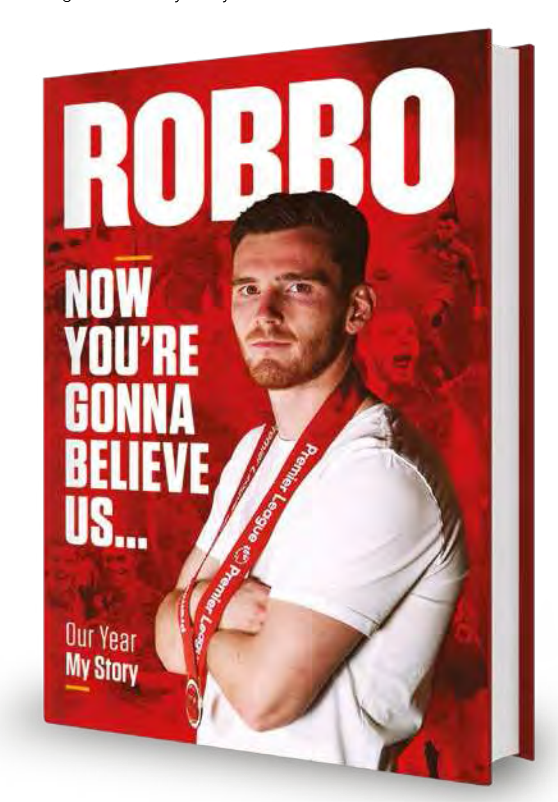
In the heat of that moment, at the end of a draining Premier League match against a stubborn opponent, we ticked every box. Trent's corner was perfect, Sadio attacked the ball, getting across his man and meeting it with a perfect header that gave Heaton no chance.

I saw a picture afterwards that showed just how brave Sadio had been, diving in despite knowing he was likely to get booted in the head. That is him all over – a brilliant combination of bravery, strength, skill and desire.

I wouldn't ever want to change what I do and being part of a team that always keeps going no matter what is something really special but when the ball hit the net I would have given anything to be in the away end. I saw the videos of the celebrations afterwards and it looked unbelievable in there.

For our supporters, it wasn't just a late winner, it felt bigger than that. That's why they went nuts. People have said to me since that the reason they went so mad was that it felt like a title-winning moment, even though it was only early November.





ROBBO – NOW YOU'RE GONNA BELIEVE US **is available from store.liverpoolfc.com and official club stores. Andy Robertson will be making a donation from his book proceeds to his charity AR26.**

HENDO ON ROBBO'S BOOK

"It's a really good insight and reflection of what last season was like. It's good fun as well. That said, he devotes far too much time to his lucky header at Villa away, which he manages to make sound like Maradona's second goal against England in the 1986 World Cup… So I think the saying is 'available in all good bookshops'. As much as I hate to admit it, he's done a cracking job and it's worth a read or listen. If nothing else, you might get a sense of satisfaction propping up a wonky table by resting the shorter leg on Robbo's face!"


"HERE TO WIN"

This month marks the 10th anniversary of Fenway Sports Group becoming the owners of Liverpool Football Club and here are the moments that have helped define the decade

Words: William Hughes



THE HARD WORK STARTS

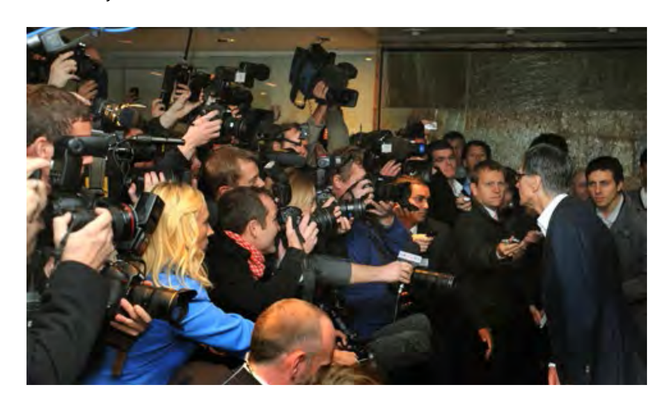
At around 4pm on 15 October 2010 news came through that New England Sports Ventures were the new owners of Liverpool FC.

Given the tumultuous tenure of the previous owners, fans had cause for a healthy caution. Yet given the very real threat of administration that had hovered over the club, Liverpool's board of directors were delighted.

The signing of a contract at the City offices of Slaughter and May meant NESV, owners of the Boston Red Sox, were free to pay off around £200m of debts owing to the Royal Bank of Scotland and take control of the club.

Then LFC chairman Martin Broughton said: "Every Liverpool fan knows that the most nerve-racking way to win a football match is in a penalty shootout. But as long as you get the right result, it's worth the wait. We've always known that we were in the right and now we've got justice."

John Henry declared himself proud and humbled to be the club's new owner: "We have a lot of work to do and I can't tell you how happy I am that we've finally got to this point. It's too early to say what we're going to do, but obviously we're here to win and we'll do whatever is necessary."





RETURN OF THE KING

One of the first big decisions the new owners took was relieving Roy Hodgson of his duties as manager. Things just hadn't worked out and a 3-1 defeat at Blackburn Rovers on the first Wednesday of 2011 left Liverpool just five points above bottom side West Ham and 19 adrift of leaders Manchester United.

The action taken was firm and immediate with Kenny Dalglish brought in to help unify the team and fanbase.

A statement from the owners said: "We are delighted that Kenny has agreed to step in and manage the team for the remainder of the season. Kenny was not just a legendary footballer, he was the third of our three most successful managers – three giants. We are extraordinarily fortunate and grateful that he has decided to step in



during the middle of this season."

The King duly steadied the ship, leading Liverpool to a top-six finish, and was offered a three-year contract the following summer. Under his charge the Reds won the first trophy of the Fenway Sports Group era (they had been renamed from NESV in March 2011) in the shape of the 2012 League Cup.

However, league form remained sketchy and that summer the owners demonstrated again that they were not afraid of making tough calls, opting to move on with a new manager.

Nonetheless, Fenway's admiration for Dalglish was such that he was appointed to the board as a non-executive director in 2013 and in the club's 125th year of 2017, the Centenary Stand was renamed in his honour.

BRAND NEW AGE

Fenway took a bold step by replacing Dalglish with a young, up-and-coming manager. After a considered interview process, Brendan Rodgers was appointed as his successor in June 2012.

John Henry explained the thinking: "This is one of the most important steps we will take in building the kind of club on and off the pitch supporters can be excited about.

"Brendan's comprehensive football philosophy is perfectly aligned with those at the club and those soon to join the club. He was the first choice unanimously among them and he had no hesitation at all in embracing exactly what we want to try to build at Liverpool.

"We do not expect miracles overnight nor should anyone else. But we firmly believe that the direction the club is heading in will lead to Premier League championships. We will embrace the unconventional, build the right way and together set a bold, exciting course for this historic club."

It was the middle of Rodgers' three full seasons that saw the Reds come closest to winning the coveted league title only to finish behind Manchester City. But the expansive, attacking football produced by that team, spearheaded by the SAS – Suarez and Sturridge – was some of the best seen by Liverpool supporters in years.



THE NORMAL ONE

If there has been one pivotal moment above all in FSG's decade at Anfield it's the appointment of Jürgen Klopp as manager halfway through.

An unorthodox yet hugely successful coach at Dortmund, he was persuaded to cut short a sabbatical to take over at Anfield after both owners and the man himself believed he would be the perfect fit for Liverpool.

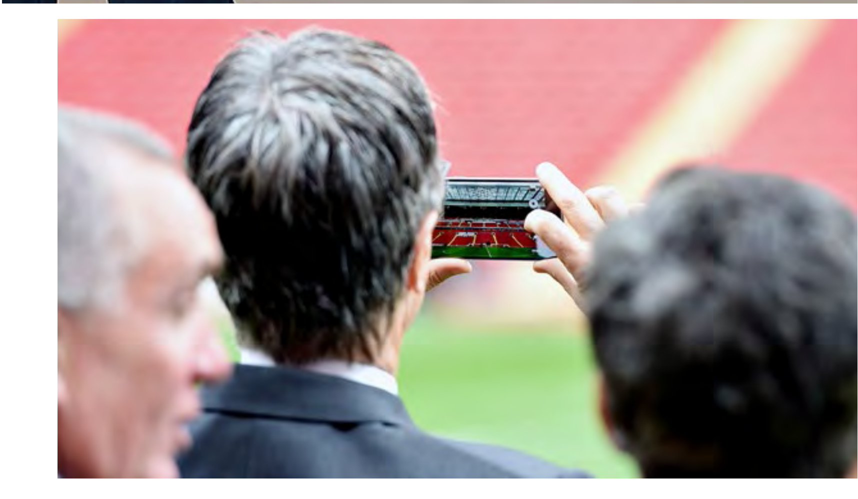
Speaking on the recent BBC documentary *The Thirty Year Wait*, principal owner Henry detailed the first conversation FSG had about Klopp, describing it as "one of the most exciting phone calls" he had ever received.

"[FSG president] Mike Gordon called me one day and said, 'We're going to have a chance to meet Jürgen in New York'. For me, it was one of the most exciting phone calls I have received in our ten years with the club. He's a tall man with a big heart and an incredible passion for doing things right."

Last December, when Klopp signed a contract extension through to 2024, Henry added: "Back in 2015, we used the phrase 'ideal fit' when we appointed Jürgen. This continues to apply today and, if anything, the circumstances make it more pertinent. We consider him to be the best there is.

"If Liverpool Football Club were looking to appoint the most outstanding, elite manager for our current status today, Jürgen would be the first choice – no question.

"We believe this deal cements a relationship built on trust and mutual benefit: Jürgen has delivered for LFC and LFC has delivered for Jürgen. Both parties have come to the conclusion that by continuing to work together and build on the work of the last four years, the opportunity exists to maximise each other's potential."



STAND AND DELIVER

Following the previous ownership's shelved plans for a new stadium on Stanley Park, rather than rush into a decision or make grandiose statements, FSG took counsel from many sources before announcing plans to expand Anfield.

In late 2014, chairman Tom Werner explained: "Since Fenway Sports Group took ownership of the club, we were committed to explore in depth all options for the future of Anfield Stadium.

"We listened to fans, the community, partners, the Supporters' Committee and key stakeholders involved in the club. It was just over





two years ago that we said our preference was to stay at Anfield and here we are today announcing that the expansion is going ahead. We have made more progress in the past two years than in the last decade."

John Henry had said that he wanted Liverpool to stay at Anfield, partly because it reminded him of Fenway Park, home of the Boston Red Sox baseball team, which FSG also owns. And Werner added: "Having experience of expanding Fenway Park and being through a similar and very successful project for the Red Sox, everyone at FSG is extremely proud and excited to be part of expanding Anfield Stadium."

The club officially opened the new-look Main Stand ahead of the visit of Leicester City in September 2016, increasing the overall capacity by around 8,500 to 54,074.

The £100m expansion work, part of a wider £260m regeneration of the Anfield area of the city, added a third tier for supporters. It now houses about 20,500 seats and also provides a new home for the Hillsborough Memorial on 96 Avenue, one of two public areas around the new stand along with Paisley Square.



BACKING THE BOSS

Much was made of the Reds using a 'moneyball model' to statistically identify shrewd signings at modest prices. But while Liverpool's recruitment methods have received widespread recognition in recent years, FSG have also been prepared to back their managers with big-money buys when considered necessary.

They have broken the club's transfer record on three occasions: first within months of taking over when the £50 million received for Fernando Torres was invested in Andy Carroll (£35m) and Luis Suarez (£22.8m); then in 2017 they spent £43.9 million on Mohamed Salah, a fee which now looks like a steal.

The same could be said of Virgil van Dijk who arrived in January 2018 for £75m, then also a world-record sum for a defender. The following summer, when Klopp identified Alisson Becker as the goalkeeper he required, the owners didn't hesitate to splash the cash again to secure the Brazilian's services from Roma for a reported £65m.

Both players helped shore up the spine of the side and by the summer of 2019 Liverpool were European champions, a solid early return on the investment.

CUTTING THEIR CLOTH

While FSG have never been afraid to spend big, they have also been prudent in their financial management. As the phrase 'net spend' entered the footballing lexicon, most of those transfer fees were covered by funds raised from sales of existing players.

Fernando Torres was sold for two-and-a-half times the £20m the Reds had spent on him. Liverpool recruited Raheem Sterling for £500,000 from QPR in February 2010 and, when it became clear he wanted to leave, brought in £49m from his departure. Philippe Coutinho was signed from AC Milan for £8.5m in January 2013 then sold for a reported £142m in January 2018, a fee that helped fund the captures of Van Dijk and Alisson.

In 19 transfer-windows since taking the reins, FSG have sanctioned 66 major incoming transfers at a cost of around £800m and recouped around £637m in sales, an approach which has reaped rewards on and off the field.



COMMERCIAL CLOUT

In April 2010, Liverpool were sixth in the annual Forbes list of the top 10 football clubs by value, worth an estimated £822m. When the list was published earlier this year, the Reds' estimated worth had risen almost three-fold to more than £2 billion.

Liverpool's commercial muscle has grown significantly with the club now enjoying partnerships with 21 well-known brands. The newly-negotiated kit deal with sportswear giants Nike is set to be the most profitable in the club's history and the expanded Main Stand earned the club an additional £12m in matchday revenues from its first season of operation of 2016/17.

The success of Klopp's team in achieving regular Champions League football has also been a shot in the arm for the club's finances. The Reds played in European football's top tournament just once in FSG's first five years at the helm when they went out in the group stages. However, the 2020/21 campaign will be the fourth successive season the Reds have been involved in the competition.

The last three seasons have, of course, seen them reach two finals as well as last season's round of 16. Winning the tournament in 2019 was worth almost £100m.



CHAMPIONS OF EVERYTHING

As FSG approached the end of their first decade as owners of LFC, they did so knowing the team had been crowned Premier League champions at last, having become champions of Europe and the world the previous year.

In contrast, when they had taken ownership in October 2010 the Reds were 18th in the Premier League and had just been held to a goalless draw by Utrecht in the group stages of the Europa League.

"It was a long time coming," John Henry told the club website in August 2020. "Watching Jürgen get emotional made all of us emotional. It has been an emotional ten years. Liverpool Football Club is a family and it's really something extraordinary to be part of.

"I just want to say [to the supporters] that you've waited a long time

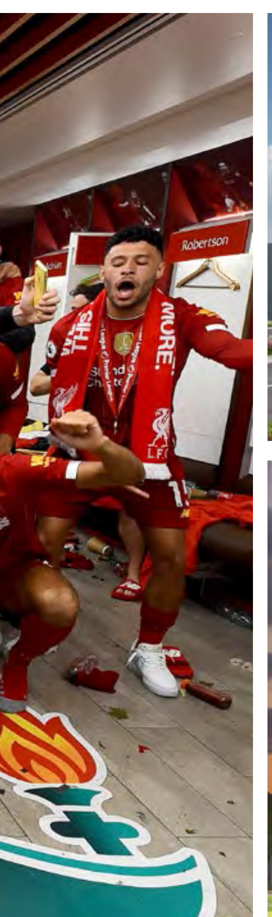




for this and I know we all have to celebrate responsibly, but this really feels sort of like the gift that keeps on giving... To be involved with that, to have been a part of it has really been the capstone of my career and I think all of us who have been a part of Fenway Sports Group."

The principal owner also applauded the impact and influence of Klopp and the team around the manager at Melwood for their dedication to making Liverpool successful. "I could go on and on about Jürgen but I think what is important is he is determined every day to do the right thing, whether it's with regard to what happens on the pitch, whether it's regard to nutrition for the club.

"He is just determined every day to do the right thing and that rubs off."





THE FUTURE

In recent years FSG have given the green light to two projects that will continue to see the club develop on and off the field.

Work is now well underway on a £50m project that will see Liverpool leave their Melwood training base to take up residence alongside the team's Academy at Kirkby.

The project, a joint-enterprise between the club and Knowsley Council, was announced in May 2018 and the 9,200sqm HQ will create a combined first-team and U23 Academy facility, each with its own identity.

Along with new pitches and parking, the facilities will incorporate two gyms, a full-size sports hall, pool, hydrotherapy complex and specialist sports rehabilitation suites, dedicated TV studios, press-conference facilities and office accommodation.

Andy Hughes, the club's chief operating officer, said: "We recognise that Melwood has played a significant role in the club's success and forms an important part of our history. However, [it is] limited in space and is unable to accommodate our longer term ambitions, which is why we are exploring options on the Academy site."

Last November the club also confirmed plans to expand the Anfield Road stand which will add 7,000 seats and take the stadium's capacity to just over 61,000.

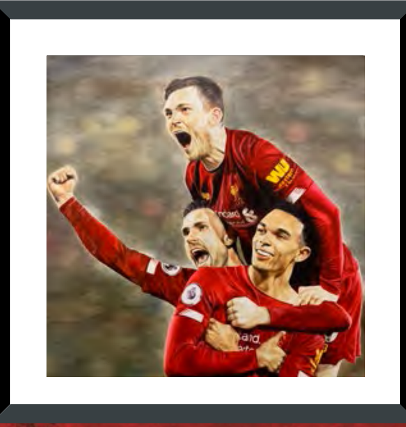
However, in April this year the project was paused due to the COVID-19 pandemic. With the complex build needing to be completed between seasons, the earliest target for completion is now the summer of 2023.

Nonetheless it promises to be another exciting step which will further underpin Liverpool FC's vast progress under FSG's watch.



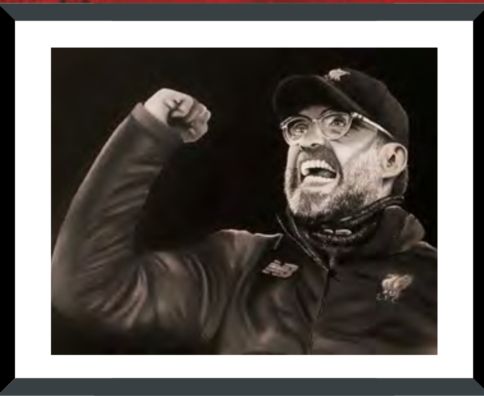




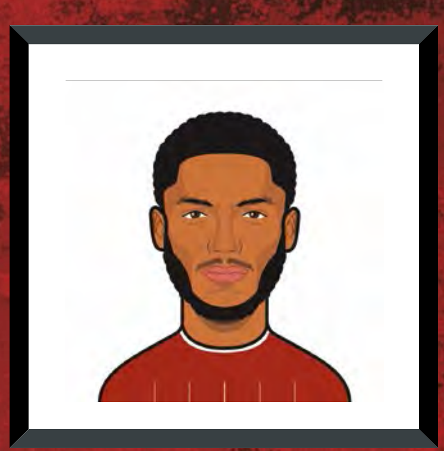


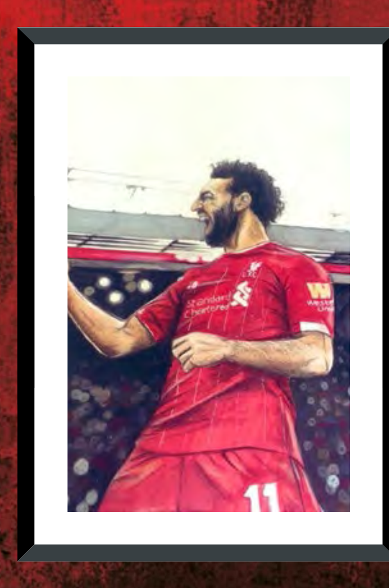

Premier League

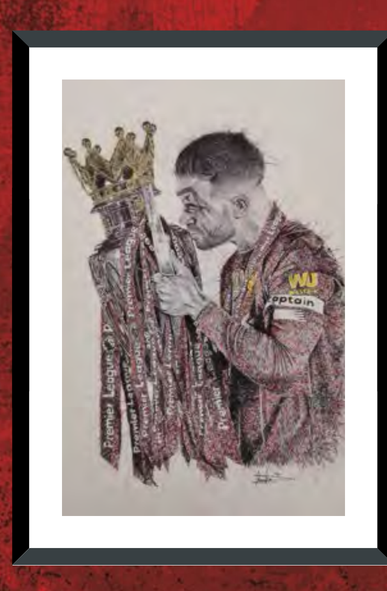


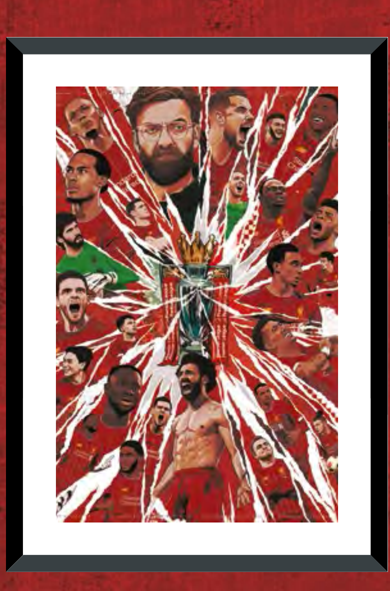














ART & SOUL

There are some mighty talented Reds fans out there showcasing their stunning stuff on social media

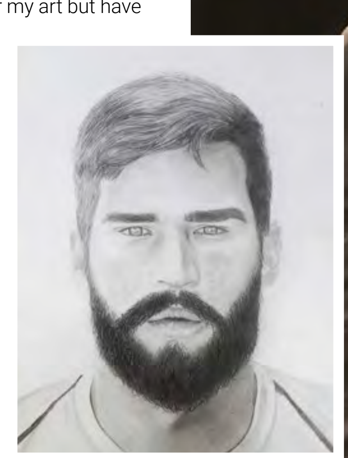


KOPITE KIMBERLEY

Kimberley McDonald is a 22-year-old, full-time portrait artist who paints Reds stars among many other subjects.

"I usually use graphite pencils for my art but have started to learn how to paint portraits using acrylic paints on canvas," she says. "I'm self-taught and have been drawing since I could hold a pencil.

"My proudest moment so far would be when Alisson Becker liked a portrait I drew of him and posted on Instagram and Twitter. My favourite piece is my Jürgen Klopp painting which took around a week to complete – I love how I managed to capture the emotion in his fist-bumps!"





Follow Kimberley on Twitter @kimberleyxlfc

CREATED IN CAVAN

In the Irish county town of Cavan, not far from the Republic's border with Northern Ireland, you'll find Reds fan and artist Sean Leonard.

"I'm a father of two, soon to be three," he says, "so currently this is just a part-time vocation. I adore drawing, so it would be amazing if I could make this work full-time."

Sean specialises in portraits and caricatures and recently began experimenting a little more with his work.

"I began doing something I call 'continuous line drawing'. Using just a pen, I create portraits by drawing lines on a page and very rarely lifting the pen, hence the squiggle/messy effect."

His work has been signed by Steven Gerrard, Rafael Benitez and Bruce Grobbelaar, and he's also worked with Hibernian Football Club, creating a portrait of former player Daryl Horgan scoring in the Edinburgh derby, 500 posters of which were given out to fans last year.

Follow Sean on Instagram @seanleonardart





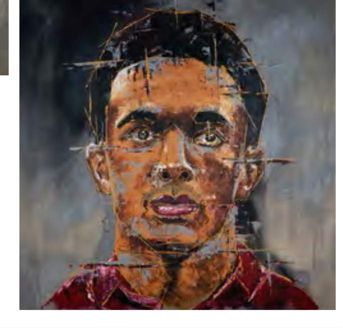


JOHN CHARLES: THE BOSS

It's been some journey for local artist John Charles, who created these sensational images of Jordan Henderson, Jürgen Klopp and Trent Alexander-Arnold.







He studied art in school at GCSE level but then, as he reveals, "took the wrong path and turned to drink and drugs for the next 12 years. It wasn't until I was 27 and in the early stages of my recovery from addiction that I realised I could still paint.

"Since then I've used art as part of my recovery and try to use this as a message for others. I'm now just over nine years clean and sober and art is my passion. In November 2019 I decided to take the leap of faith and leave my office job of 20 years to become a full-time professional artist.

"I start each painting with basic brushwork to give me a guide. For the next stage I use a palette knife to add layers and depth. The final part of the process is when the painting comes alive with gold lines applied to the subject."

A few seasons back John presented then Reds star Mamadou Sakho with a portrait which the defender duly had engraved on a custom pair of shin pads. Most recently he held a virtual exhibition called *Liverpool Icons* featuring just one footballer, LFC full-back Trent. Again, a striking work of art.

Follow John on Instagram @artistjohncharles









MARK OF EXCELLENCE

Art has been the full-time job of Liverpool-born Mark Jenkins since 2005, the year of the dramatic Champions League triumph in Istanbul.

He says: "I decided to go full-time around 2012 and I'm now self-employed as an artist. I've had this passion from childhood and studied at the Arts Centre Liverpool before going on to do a degree in animation.

"All my artwork is done in acrylic paint on canvas working from photographs. My proudest moment was when I was commissioned by the 23 Foundation to produce a painting of each player from Liverpool's 1963/64 League championship-winning team, to be presented to them at Anfield."

Follow Mark on Instagram @markjenkinslfcart



EMILY'S THE WIZARD OF OZ

Melbourne-based Reds fan Emily Marrocco is a self-taught artist with a love for oil painting, and this is how she captured Trent Alexander-Arnold celebrating his goal at Leicester City last season with team-mates Jordan Henderson and Andy Robertson.

"Art has always been an enormous part of my life and my personality," she says. "From the moment I was able to hold a pencil I have been obsessed with drawing and creating.

"I began painting in November 2019 after years of graphite drawing





and I'm inspired by the things I'm passionate about. I primarily use the *alla prima* [at first attempt] technique where paint is applied to the canvas without allowing the layer to dry before applying more.

"The reaction to this TAA, Robbo, and Henderson piece has been incredible. Feeling and emotion was vital to the finished piece, and seeing the amount of support and encouragement from other LFC fans all over the world has motivated me to devote more time to this passion of mine."

Follow Emily on Instagram @emilymarroccoart



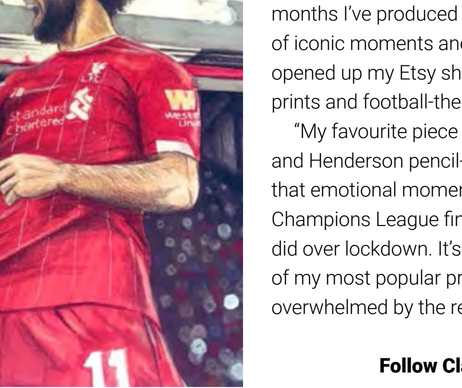
CLARE CAPTURES THE EMOTION

Clare Gardner is a self-taught artist from Liverpool. She's always done commissions for friends and family and a few years ago she launched a small business customising trainers on Instagram and Twitter.

With a husband and three boys who are all huge Reds fans, she decided to post portraits of their favourite players on social media and the fanbase reaction has been brilliant.

"My portraits are mostly done with colour pencil but I have also done some work using watercolour and oil paints," she says. "Over the past few months I've produced images from lots of iconic moments and I've recently opened up my Etsy shop to sell my prints and football-themed artwork.

"My favourite piece is the Klopp and Henderson pencil-drawing – that emotional moment from the Champions League final – which I did over lockdown. It's definitely one of my most popular prints and I was overwhelmed by the response."



Follow Clare on Instagram @clarecustoms



GENIUS JIMMY

Jimmy O'Mara is the creative force behind these images of Thiago and Bobby, among many others. He's a graphic designer at Classic Football Shirts who describes his work as vector illustrations.

It's mostly done in Adobe Illustrator using a keyboard and mouse, but he's recently expanded his techniques and now uses an iPad Pro with an Apple Pencil and Procreate [a digital painting app].

He reveals: "I was always drawing as a kid and that stayed with me right through school and college. I have been doing illustrations since university and it's kind of developed and spiralled out of control!

"I've done freelance work for big companies like adidas, illustrating international players for the release of their 2018 World Cup kits, as well as football clubs. My main focus, though, is my print store. I love creating new illustrations for my social-media page and then turning them into high-quality prints.





"My favourite pieces would probably be my special-edition prints for the Champions League win then the Premier League, featuring every player in the squad. The response to them was crazy!"

Follow Jimmy on Instagram @entiredesign





YONI'S RED LEGENDS

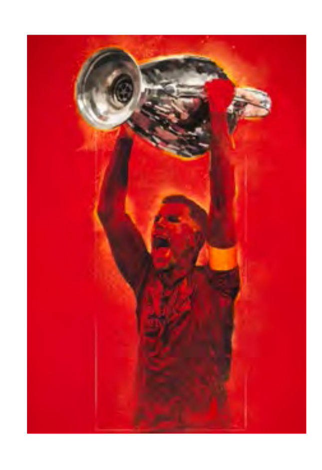
Film-maker and designer Yoni Weisberg created this stunning tribute to the 2019/20 Premier League champions and describes it as "my favourite thing I've created."

It started off, he explains, "as just something I was doing for myself. I had a clear idea in my head of what I wanted on my own wall to celebrate the Reds finally winning the league, and having thousands of people react to it is an overwhelming feeling."

Yoni, a full-time director mostly working in TV commercials, has a background in art and graphic design but found a new passion for illustration when he bought an iPad Pro. "I tend to do a vector style of illustrating but it's all done by hand in Procreate.

"I find that far more responsive than traditional vector work in something like Illustrator. Then I put it all together and add final textures in Photoshop, which I've been using for almost 20 years."

Follow Yoni on Instagram @yoniweisberg





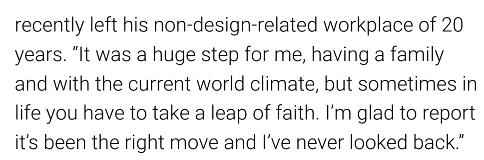


KARL KEEPS IT REAL

Karl Thyer, 38, is the artist behind these fab head-and-shoulder images of Reds stars past and present. Describing himself as a vector-based sports illustrator, he's "always been into art since school but have only been illustrating digitally since about 2016, so I'm a bit of a late starter."

Karl continues: "I'm self-taught and learnt most of my vector skills from YouTube videos. I use a program called Affinity Designer which is similar to Adobe Illustrator. I'm a bit 'old skool' in the fact that I still mainly use a mouse and keyboard, although I also have a Wacom Cintiq [Japanese 'pen-and-display' for tablets and screens] and iPad Pro with stylus which I also use at times."

Illustration is Karl's full-time job now, having recently left his non-design-related workplace of 20 years. "It was a huge step for me, having a family and with the current world climate, but sometimes in life you have to take a leap of faith. I'm glad to report it's been the right move and I've never looked back."



So positive has been the response to his work that players have used his images for their profile pics. "Currently I have Joe Gomez and Robbie Fowler and previously Adam Lallana and Jamie Carragher. I've been followed on Twitter by Robbie and the big man Virgil van Dijk, while Joe follows me on Instagram.

"I was also asked by Nike to work with them on the new LFC kit launch, which unfortunately due to time-constraints didn't happen, but it's made me feel extremely proud that my work has been noticed and all the late nights and hard work is paying off."



Follow Karl on Instagram @karlthyer









AB-SOLUTELY FABULOUS

Abigail Rudkin is a Liverpool-based acrylic painter currently working from home and the main focus of her art is LFC. Her distinctive style shines through her creations.

"I'm a full-time Fine Art student going into my third year and I do LFC paintings and commissions as much as I can. I'd say I paint about 20-25 hours a week. I also do ten hours a week for Neesie, a charity for single mothers in Bradford. I'm helping the charity expand to Liverpool and I'm also the illustrator for a Home Office-backed children's book."

Abigail's proudest moment so far was producing a painting for Adam Lallana which now hangs above the bar in his house. Here it is, along with ones of Jordan Henderson kissing the Premier League and Champions League trophies, and Jürgen Klopp carrying all the cups won in the last few seasons – we love them!

"We auctioned the Klopp one for Christie's NHS Foundation Trust and have raised £435 so far," adds Abigail.

Follow Abigail on Instagram @artbyabigailr



KLOPP BY KRISTIN

This stunning image of the Reds boss is a guaranteed internet-breaker and it's the work of Kristin Wilkinson, a tattoo artist in the Toronto area of Canada.

"I've been creating art for most of my life," she says. "I started very young, mostly focusing on drawing, and I have just kept with it over the years. I've only recently started dabbling in painting, though, and while tattooing is my full-time profession, drawing/painting is mostly a hobby that I do in my free time."

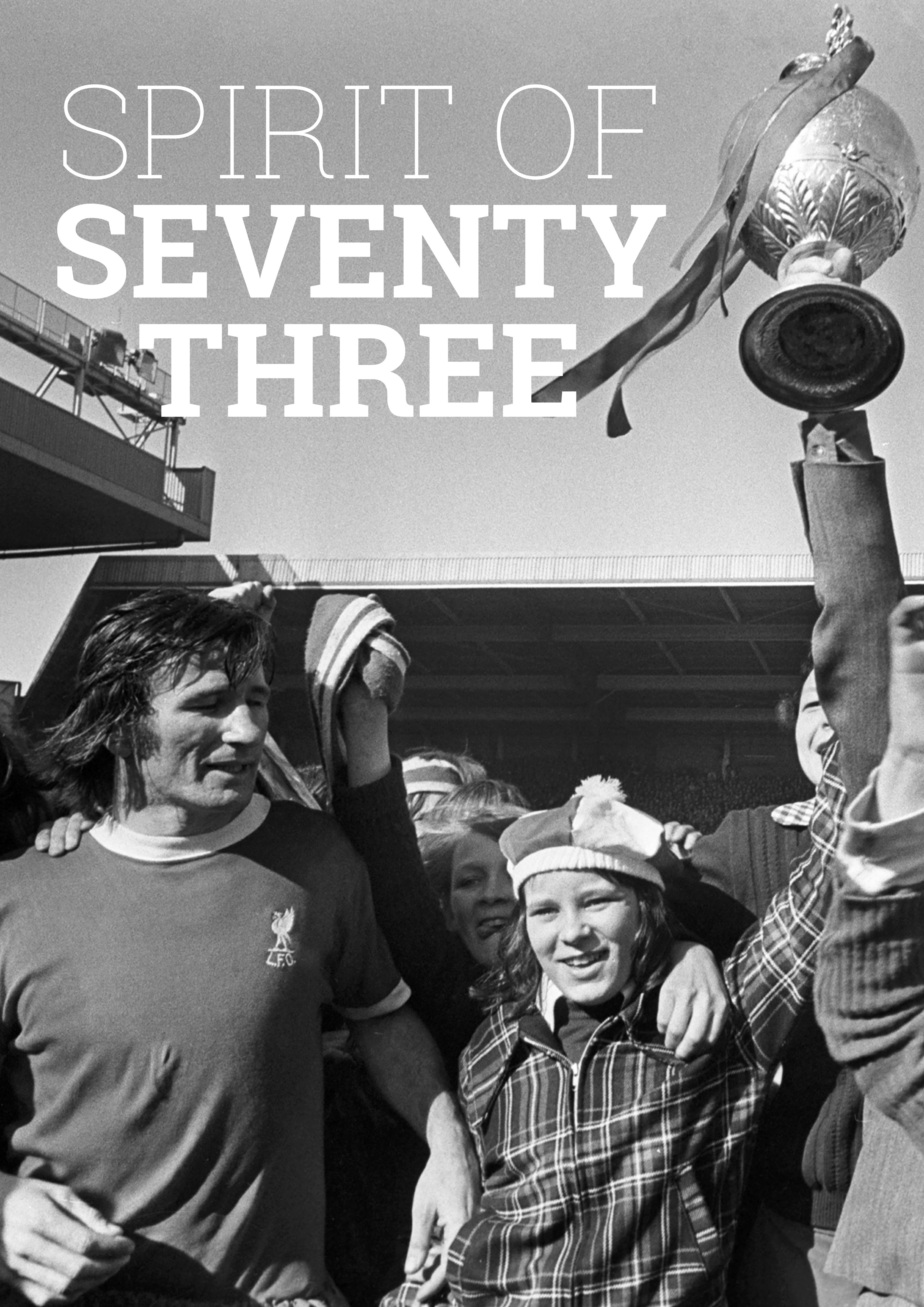
Kristin's mediums of choice are charcoal and oil paint. "After I've decided on the subject-matter – most often a portrait – I'll search for ideal reference pictures and go from there.

"For a painting I'll usually sketch it out first on the canvas with charcoal or graphite, then slowly start adding the layers of paint, building up the form and details as I go. It can take anywhere from a week to several months to complete, depending on the size and detail.

"This painting of Jürgen Klopp is probably up there as one of the pieces I'm most proud of." Rightly so, too.

Follow Kristin on Instagram @silentkw

Massive thanks to all of our guest artists for sharing their amazing images. Don't forget to follow them on social media to view their current and future work.


SPIRIT OF
SEVENTY
THREE

As a new official book chronicling all 19 of Liverpool FC's top-flight championships is released, come with us back to Bill Shankly's third and final title triumph

Words: Carl Clemente



Liverpool FC, the start of the Seventies. Bill Shankly's great side of the previous decade had gained promotion from the old Second Division, won the top-flight title twice and the FA Cup once, and progressed in Europe.

However, after their second championship triumph in 1966 the Reds went through a six-year period without any tangible success. Shankly's mistake, as he saw it, was to let his side rumble on for too long without any major rebuilding.

One cold afternoon in February 1970 they were dumped out of the FA Cup at the fifth-round stage at Second Division Watford. "After [that] I knew I had to do my job and change the team," recalled Shanks.

"It had to be done and if I didn't do it, I was shirking my obligations."

Most of the old guard were subsequently phased out and in their place came the likes of Ray Clemence, Larry Lloyd, John Toshack, Steve Heighway and Brian Hall, not to mention the inspirational signing from Scunthorpe United, young Kevin Keegan.

These newcomers, plus the younger players from the 1960s like Tommy Smith, Chris Lawler, Ian Callaghan and Emlyn Hughes who had survived the post-Watford cull, would be the nucleus for Shankly's next team.

By the middle of 1972 his rebuilding process was almost complete and it would bear fruit in a quite remarkable way.

The squad that kicked off the 1972/73 campaign was one of the strongest the club had had for years, even though midfielder Hall would later note: "Although there was great optimism in the camp at the start of the season, it was no different to any other season.

"That was very much the nature of Bill Shankly. He inspired confidence into the lads with ease. If he told us once, he told us a thousand times, that we were the greatest. It gave us a tremendous self-belief and I don't remember one time when we ran out with doubts that we wouldn't win."

On Saturday 12 August 1972 the opening round of league fixtures got underway and the Reds were trying to preserve a nine-year long record of not having lost their first game of the season, with Malcolm Allison's Manchester City making the short journey to Merseyside.

Before kick-off, Keegan was given a tremendous welcome as he received the previous season's Young Player of the Year award from LFC chairman Eric Roberts and Football League secretary Alan Hardaker.

In an eventful first half Hall gave the Reds a third-minute lead when his strike beat City's goalkeeper Joe Corrigan from the edge of the area.

Just before the interval Larry Lloyd and Wyn Davies received their marching orders for fighting and six minutes from the end the ever-consistent Ian Callaghan added a second.

Shankly wasn't happy with his defender's sending-off as Davies was clearly the culprit by head-butting Lloyd. Consequently Liverpool became the first team to fight a three-match ban of a player before the newly-formed independent disciplinary tribunal, and they won.

Lloyd told the *Liverpool Echo*: "I was pushed in the back and went down. The whistle went for a free-kick to us and as I got up and went to turn away, he butted me on the nose."

The incident was recorded by the *Match of the Day* cameras and after Lloyd's initial appeal was dismissed by an FA Disciplinary Commission a month later, Shankly used the footage to help clear the defender's name. He said: "I would not have allowed the appeal to go this far if I had not been convinced Larry was innocent."

Liverpool played six league fixtures in August 1972, losing only the last one, 3-2 at the old bogey team, Leicester City, and sat in fourth place, one point behind early leaders Arsenal.

On 16 September one of the most bizarre incidents of the season occurred. An injury to linesman Dennis Drewitt during Liverpool's trip to Highbury resulted in footballer-turned-TV-pundit Jimmy Hill taking over with the flag in a sky-blue tracksuit.

A PA announcement had been put out for any qualified referees in the crowd. Hill was just that, and he stepped forward so the game could continue.

Shankly and Arsenal manager, Bertie Mee, seemed to find the whole



Like Trent Alexander-Arnold today, Kevin Keegan was 21 when he won his Young Player of the Year award, pictured here at Anfield in August 1972


Keegan was on target in a 4-2 win over Wolves at Anfield in September 1972

THE REDS WON EVERY HOME LEAGUE GAME FROM AUGUST TO MID-JANUARY

thing rather amusing. The match finished goalless and the Reds boss commented: "He was the best linesman I have ever seen."

By the time Sheffield United came to Anfield on Saturday 23 September, Liverpool, along with Wolverhampton Wanderers, were the only First Division sides with a 100 per cent home league record. The Reds beat the Blades 5-0.

There followed three wins and two draws over the next three weeks, including hard-fought victories away to rivals Leeds United and at home to neighbours Everton.

Liverpool welcomed Stoke City on Saturday 21 October, which turned out to be England goalkeeping legend Gordon Banks' last appearance in competitive football and his eleventh domestic game at Anfield.

The following day he was returning home from Stoke's old Victoria Ground, having received treatment after the Liverpool game, when he

TV presenter Jimmy Hill, left here with referee Pat Partridge in the middle, was an emergency linesman in Liverpool's goalless draw at Arsenal

Kop-end goal, old Main Stand, the Anfield noise

was involved in a traffic accident that resulted in him losing the sight in his right eye.

High-flying Chelsea travelled to Anfield the day before Bonfire Night in November and became Liverpool's first double-victims of the season, having gone down 2-1 at Stamford Bridge in August.

It finished 3-1 and the formidable front-two partnership of John Toshack and Kevin Keegan took most of the credit. The big Welshman scored the opener from Keegan's pass in the 34th minute and on the hour Toshack's flighted centre returned the compliment. Within five minutes Tosh headed home his second from Steve Heighway's superb cross.

That result moved the Reds three points ahead of second-placed Arsenal with a game-in-hand, as the Gunners crashed 2-0 at home to Coventry City.

Seven days later, though, Liverpool suffered their first league defeat since 2 September when they lost 2-0 to bottom of-the-table Manchester United at Old Trafford. It was their first reversal in 18 fixtures, covering all competitions, even more surprising straight after a morale-boosting 3-1 UEFA Cup success away to AEK Athens.

But Shankly's side then hit a rich vein of form, ending the year unbeaten in the league since the Old Trafford setback. On Boxing Day the Reds visited Bramall Lane and returned from Sheffield United with two points, winning 3-0 in what would turn out to be their biggest away success of the season.

All of a sudden, during the final weeks of 1972 the team was without its commanding captain Tommy Smith as he was hospitalised with broken ribs following a car crash.

During Smith's ten-game absence Emlyn Hughes took over as skipper. On Saturday 30 December in their last game of 1972 and 39th fixture of the season the Reds beat Crystal Palace 1-0 at Anfield and set a new club record in top-flight football of 21 consecutive home league wins.

The history books had to be rewritten recently as this record was extended to 24 home league wins by Jürgen Klopp's side from 9 February 2019 to 5 July 2020.

Liverpool marched confidently into the New Year with a three-point lead at the top of the First Division table, and in view of their excellent home record the rest of the league must have begun to wonder who could stop their march to the championship?

However, there were hiccups. Despite Smith's return to action, the year started with hiccups as Liverpool took just two points from four outings between 20 January and 17 February.

In addition the Reds failed to extend their record of consecutive home league wins as they drew 1-1 against Brian Clough's Derby County.

The following Saturday they were hoping to bounce back at Molineux but were defeated 2-1 by Wolves, followed by elimination from the FA Cup in a fourth-round replay against Manchester City at Maine Road.

Shankly's team had just won one game from their last five and results weren't to improve.

Three days later on Saturday 10 February the Reds received Bertie Mee's Arsenal, who were just one point behind in second place. An Alan Ball penalty and a well-taken John Radford goal gave the visitors a 2-0 victory and the Gunners took over from Liverpool as league leaders.

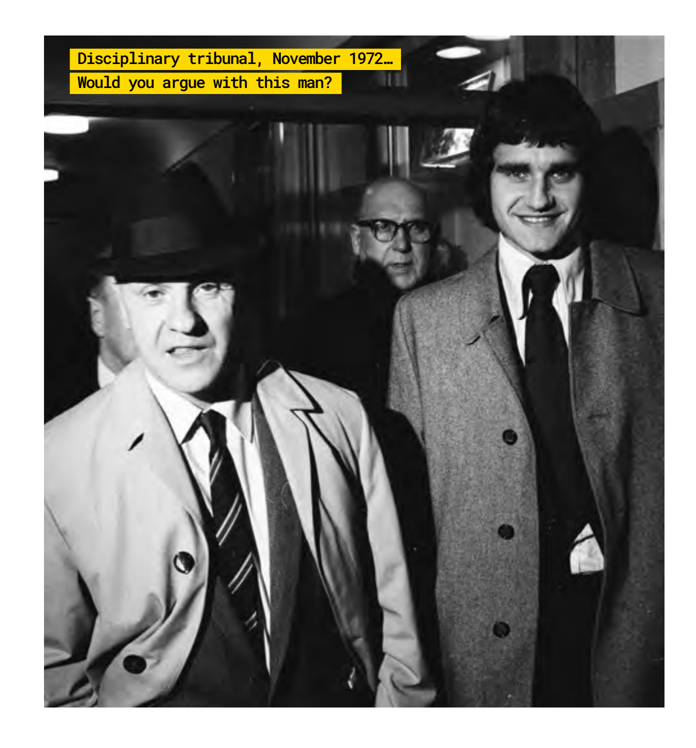
It was the Reds' first home defeat in all competitions since way back on 1 January 1972, a run of 32 games in total.

After the game Shankly said: "From now on the first team won't be



Chelsea's Ray Wilkins and team-mates try to thwart Keegan during a 3-1 Liverpool win at Anfield

SHANKS ARRIVED WITH HALF-AN-HOUR TO GO. "NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT TODAY," HE SAID CASUALLY. "I'VE JUST SEEN THE LEEDS BOYS – THEY LOOK WHITE WITH FRIGHT"


Disciplinary tribunal, November 1972… Would you argue with this man?

reporting to training until Wednesdays. The players who have led the First Division since September have not suddenly lost their skills, they have just run themselves out.

"They have played 47 competitive games and not surprisingly they lost their competitive edge."

By 24 February 1973, the Saturday that Ipswich Town travelled to Anfield, the title race was really hotting up. Arsenal's previous 1-0 win over Leicester City had put them first, two points ahead of Liverpool, who still had a game-in-hand.

Leeds lay four points behind the leaders in third, having played two matches fewer, while Ipswich, who also had two games-in-hand, were six points adrift.

It was also the day Arsenal were involved in FA Cup action, giving Liverpool a great chance to go above them on goal-average.

Steve Heighway opened the scoring against Ipswich in the 67th minute only for former Everton and future Reds striker David Johnson to equalise soon afterwards. But ten minutes from time a pinpoint centre from Phil Boersma was controlled by Keegan on his chest and as the ball dropped, he hammered it into the bottom corner of the net for the winner. It was a most important result for Liverpool even if they had failed to impress.

As April approached the league began to look like a two-horse race, with Liverpool one point ahead of the Gunners after 37 games. However, Don Revie's Leeds were hanging on in third position.

Leeds were a team the Reds respected and their visit to Anfield on Monday 23 April was dubbed a title showdown. The gates were locked more than an hour before kick-off and the clash received worldwide press coverage, even as far away as Japan, and it was broadcast live on West German radio.

Emlyn Hughes would recall: "Before the Leeds game we were sitting down in the dressing-room and hardly a word was spoken because we were so nervous. It was a match we had to win.

"Then Shanks arrived with half-an-hour to go. 'Nothing to worry about today', he said casually. 'I've just seen the Leeds boys – they look white with fright'."

More than 55,000 fans crammed into Anfield and watched their heroes almost claim the First Division crown with a 2-0 win.

The *Liverpool Echo* was already acclaiming the champions-elect. 'SUPER REDS TOP THE LOT!' read the headline and scribe Chris James wrote: "Only freak results, which are best left to the mathematicians and computers, can stop Liverpool winning the Championship now."

Keegan was the hero again, making one goal, scoring another, and he paid tribute to the fans: "They're the people we do it for. They're the people who make it all worthwhile."

Although the Reds could still mathematically be caught by Arsenal and the champagne remained on ice, Shankly admitted: "The players have done an incredible job considering the number of matches they've had to play. I think we can call ourselves champions now.

"I'm delighted for the players, for the club, and especially for the fans, who have again proved themselves the greatest in the world."

After qualifying for the UEFA Cup final by besting Tottenham Hotspur on away-goals in the last four, the Reds wound up their league programme with a goalless draw against Leicester City at Anfield, taking the necessary point to secure the title. Liverpool had 60 points with nearest challengers Arsenal on 57 with only one game-in-hand.



Those were the days my friend… Kopites in full voice

“THE DAY OF DAYS”











When Liverpool clinched the title on Saturday 28 April 1973 after a goalless draw with Leicester City the scenes at the end would live long in the memory of those who were there, as the players paraded the trophy and Shanks saluted the Kop.

Horace Yates, sports editor for the *Liverpool Echo*, described the occasion thus: “For colour, Liverpool’s vivid red of course, fervour, song and sound, this was the day of days…

“The League trophy was not unveiled to public view until the final, almost triumphant blast of referee [Iorwerth] Jones’ whistle. Then out it came to the players in the centre-circle, closely followed by Mr Shankly, whose appearance increased the bedlam to deafening volume.

“As the swaying Kop stretched their scarves end to end among the 22,000 fans there, moving rhythmically to present a vast, almost dazzling sea of colour, off came the manager’s coat to reveal a striking red shirt.”














Keegan scores against Leeds in April 1973 to edge the Reds towards the title


Shanks salutes the Kop after the goalless draw with Leicester

IN FRONT OF 56,000 FANS, SKIPPER TOMMY SMITH TOOK THE TROPHY AND THE TEAM WENT ON A LAP OF HONOUR

The champers was finally cracked open for Shankly and his players to celebrate the club's eighth league championship in front of the club's heartbeat, the Spion Kop.

The scenes that followed are still talked about today and the title-clinching draw against the Foxes is regarded as one of the greatest atmospheres Anfield has ever witnessed.

In front of 56,000 fans, skipper Tommy Smith received the trophy and went on a lap of honour with his team-mates. Banners and flags were waved, the Kop swayed, and a red-shirted Shankly answered the calls of the fans to join his jubilant players on the pitch. A truly memorable day in the history of Liverpool Football Club as a great communion was enjoyed among the players, supporters and staff.

But Liverpool could not afford too many celebrations. They had a UEFA Cup final looming against West German side Borussia Moenchengladbach.

During the first leg at Anfield torrential rain turned the pitch into a pond and Austrian referee Erich Linemayr had no alternative but to lead the players off after a goalless 27 minutes. He suspended the action for 20 minutes pending a pitch inspection then finally abandoned the game as the rain continued to lash down.

Liverpool and Borussia officials immediately agreed on a return match for the following night, rain gods permitting. The game went ahead and two goals from Keegan and one from Lloyd gave the Reds a 3-0 lead to take to Germany.

Thirteen days later Liverpool weathered another storm, conceding two goals by half-time but showing true grit to hold on for a 3-2 aggregate triumph and a first European trophy after eight consecutive seasons of Continental action.

Tommy Smith later said: "I never realised how big the UEFA Cup was. It had a big stone base and weighed a ton. I remember on the lap of honour some big heavy fella jumped on my back and I nearly collapsed. After such a gruelling match I was absolutely knackered.

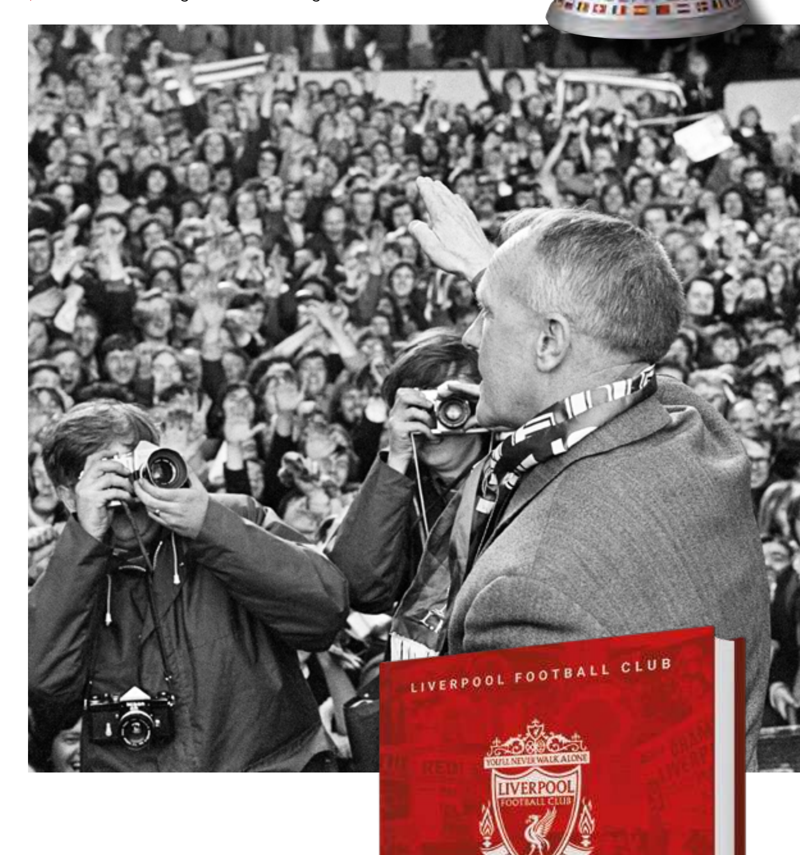
"I eventually made it to the dressing-room and said to Shanks, 'Here you are boss – the cup's yours'. I handed it to him but I don't think he realised how heavy it was either. He nearly dropped it!"

On Friday 25 May 1973 a quarter-of-a-million people lined the city streets for an open-top bus parade in which local lad and reigning light-heavyweight boxing champion John Conteh joined the players to celebrate the League Championship (Shankly's third), the UEFA Cup and indeed the Central League title won by coach Ronnie Moran's reserve side for the fourth time in five years.

Seventeen players were involved in the 66 senior games of this historic season with one of them, centre-forward Jack Whitham, appearing just once as a 15-minute substitute and another, reserve goalkeeper Frank Lane, playing twice when first-choice Ray Clemence was injured.

Shankly was immensely proud of what he called the "young men who played like veterans" as he established a new era of success that would last for two decades.

Winning was becoming a wonderful habit.




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"This group of lads are hungry to improve and train with a real intensity"

Under-23s coach **BARRY LEWTAS** assesses life after lockdown, the steep learning-curve provided by the EFL Trophy, and the progress made during the season so far

Barry, how would you assess the first month of the Under-23s' competitive games?
It's a funny one because we had the two EFL Trophy games right at the start [away to Wigan Athletic and Tranmere Rovers] so there's two different parts to it really.

In terms of the league games we've performed well except for a 15-minute spell against Derby [lost 2-1] and we've improved game-on-game. When you start the season with Everton at home [won 1-0] and Manchester United away [won 5-3] in your first three games you know it's always going to be difficult but the performances and results were a real plus.

A big part of Under-23s football is trying to challenge the players against first-team opposition so the EFL Trophy games have been great in that respect. We were fantastic against Wigan in the first half but then we came up against something that we just don't encounter in our normal league programme.

Wigan started to go direct in the second half and we found those moments quite difficult [losing 6-1]. It was just a momentum change. We were well on top but then that direct approach was something we're not really used to in the U23s games.

That was shown when we went to Manchester United. They tried to play out from the back and midfield which enabled us to press and get five goals in that game.

Just a week after the Wigan game we went to Tranmere [again in the EFL Trophy Northern Section Group D] who were just as direct and I thought that we dealt with it really well. Again we played some good football and were disappointed to be on the end of a defeat when they scored late on [to win 3-2] but again that's part of football.

We felt that we more than played our part, so to lose at the end was quite tough. But in terms of the experience and how much the boys will learn from it, it was a real positive.

Overall it's been a good start and interesting in terms of the experiences we've had. There are plenty of positives and while it's not been perfect, the boys have certainly been improving all the time. We have to remember that they're a young group as well – more like an U19s or U20s team in terms of age.

The EFL Trophy has become an important part of the programme...
We want to make sure that we're exposing the boys to the demands they need at a particular time. Some boys go on loan for different experiences and that leaves a group of boys with the U23s which is the right challenge for them.

We've got the balance just right at the moment in terms of the age of the team and the experiences these boys are going to have. That's been shown in the EFL games because we have put out the team that have been playing the Premier League 2 games and some of those are still very young lads.

For example, Owen Beck has only just turned 18 so for him to be in matches where the play is so direct will be the first real exposure he's had to that. It sounds crazy but considering the experiences they'd had previously, that made it all the more difficult, so I'm really pleased with how they've responded so far.

Those loan-moves are always tailored carefully to the player's needs...
Definitely. If you look at Rhys Williams, he had two good years in the U18s and he was quite dominant physically at that level and we were happy with how he was developing in terms of his play on the ball. But obviously we knew that in the National League [with Kidderminster Harriers] he'd get a different challenge physically and it would be something that would accelerate his learning.

So the loans are carefully planned in terms of who goes out and where to and also who stays. There's certainly a method to the thinking and it's designed around trying to make sure each boy gets the right experience at the right time.

>>





If you look at lads like Adam Lewis and Tony Gallacher, they've probably become experienced U23s players now. Adam had a couple of injuries which maybe prevented other opportunities for him but he's made the brave step to go over to France and experience something different at Amiens, not just in terms of the football but also in life; learning a new language, experiencing a new culture and trying to adapt to a different way.

It's similar for Tony as well being on the other side of the world with Toronto FC. For both those lads, it will be a good opportunity to develop both as a player and as a person.

You mention Rhys Williams – you must have been delighted to see him perform so well for the seniors in the Carabao Cup matches?
Yes, of course. It's been really positive for him during the last couple of months or so. We've seen the progression of Curtis [Jones] and Neco [Williams] and now Rhys. Everyone at the Academy is extremely pleased with the opportunities these lads have been given.

The first-team staff have created a fantastic squad of players who have now won plenty of titles but they also understand the value of giving these young players the opportunity, whether that be to play – as Rhys did against Lincoln and Arsenal – or to be around seasoned professionals day-to-day at Melwood.

The opportunity the Academy boys have at the moment is fantastic and I know it's a big motivator for them. They know how hard they've got to work but it's great to see players like Rhys get his opportunity and I thought he did really well.

He was called up to the England Under-21s for the recent international break which shows how quickly how things can happen in football...
Absolutely! You have to give Rhys plenty of credit. He's a cracking boy who I've known for a long time and he went into the National League on the back of a really good U18s year.

He was a big part of the FA Youth Cup win in 2019 and he was also in the England youth set-up then, so for him to take the bold step of going into the National League and understand what parts of his game needed to develop further...and obviously his progression since coming back is fantastic.

"THE BOYS KNOW HOW HARD THEY HAVE TO WORK BUT IT'S GREAT TO SEE PLAYERS LIKE RHYS WILLIAMS GET HIS OPPORTUNITY"

He hasn't cracked it yet and he'll know that, but he's come back and obviously seen that he's not been forgotten. He's had an opportunity to train at Melwood and impressed and then he's had his opportunity with the first-team, so all credit to him.

It was the right move for him to go to Kidderminster but I would also say it was a brave move and at the moment he's reaping the benefits of it. He'll know that he'll need to keep working hard but he will because he's a real good boy so there's no worry there.

Football moves quite quickly and after starting the season with the U23s against Everton he's now been away with the England U21s and I'm sure he'll have enjoyed his time there.

In the wake of COVID-19 the UEFA Youth League has now been put back to 2021 which is understandable...
Of course. From our perspective, we just want to keep playing football because we missed almost six months, but the priority has to be to try to keep each other safe.

The UEFA Youth League is a fantastic competition and it gives us opportunity to play against European opposition. It does play a huge part in our coaching and games programme but the tournament's been

put back to March and we'll see what happens then. For now we're focused on having a clear plan as to how we can adapt our programme this year.

Obviously travel across Europe to play in tournaments isn't going to be possible, but if you include pre-season games we'd played ten matches going into the October international break and half of them were against first teams. We also played a friendly against Salford City during the break and with such a young squad we're going to make the most of all the opportunities to try and stretch the players in different ways.

We're really clear on what we need to do to make sure this young U23s squad are adapted to playing first-team football as quickly as we can.



Forward Liam Millar was shortlisted for the Premier League 2 player of the month award for September...

We put it on our WhatsApp group the night it was announced and everyone was made-up for him. Liam's only just turned 21 but he's one of the senior players and that's the sort of age-group that we are. It's great for him to take responsibility on the pitch in games and in training.

Both Liam and Ben Woodburn have been a credit to themselves. They've conducted themselves really well and added an intensity to how we've been training. Although they are senior players within the group who have both had first-team experience, they have trained and played properly and been good leaders for the group.

Liam has been an attacking threat and has given us a different dimension. He has pace, he has one v one ability, his performances have been positive and he's working hard in training on the parts of his game that he wants to get better.

It seems strange to say a 21-year-old has been one of our senior players but he has, and fair play to him to receive that nomination as it's a nice little recognition of the work he's put in so far.

Jake Cain has also caught the eye with a couple of wonderful free-kicks against Derby County and Tranmere Rovers...

He scored on the opening day of the season against Everton which ended up being the winning goal and those free-kicks have been really good, really high-level set-pieces. Jake's another boy who has a fantastic attitude. He's a real good character and a good footballer who is working really hard.

This is a group of lads who are keen, hungry to improve and who train with a real intensity. It's great to see them get the rewards week to week

Those six months lost during lockdown – has that been even more difficult for young players trying to prove themselves?

I think so. Listen, I suppose every period in a player's career is a key time but that's especially so for these young lads trying to make their way in the game. A six-month break does get in the way but it is what it is and football isn't any different to anybody else's job or lifestyle.

In that respect lockdown had a huge effect on everyone so we're not moaning about it and the boys are really enthusiastic to make up for lost time. What I would say is that they kept themselves in good shape during the lockdown which was credit to the fitness staff and the players. They came back with a real enthusiasm to train and play.

Maybe sometimes when things are taken away from you, you realise how much you miss them. I probably speak for most people because everyone missed their football, whether that was playing or watching. The lads have come back trying to make up for lost time and I've seen that in the enthusiasm and effort they're putting in on a day-to-day basis.



Interview: William Hughes


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THIS GIRL

Glory, heartache… **Ashley Hodson** has seen it all with Liverpool FC Women, for whom she's now a super centurion





After coming through the ranks of the Reds' Centre of Excellence under the guidance of current first-team manager Vicky Jepson, winger Ashley Hodson's senior career started against Sunderland.

The FA Women's Cup tie in Hetton-le-Hole is a game Ashley won't forget in a hurry for a number of reasons. Not only did it mark her first-team debut for Liverpool but it could – and should – have been a goalscoring start.

The fifth-round tie in the North East in April 2014 came just three weeks before her 19th birthday and she recalls it well "because I scored and it got given offside but it wasn't offside and I was absolutely gutted!

"I remember Beardy [then manager Matt Beard] was gutted as well and said, 'It was a great header and it wasn't offside'. So that was unfortunate but we still won the game, so never mind!"

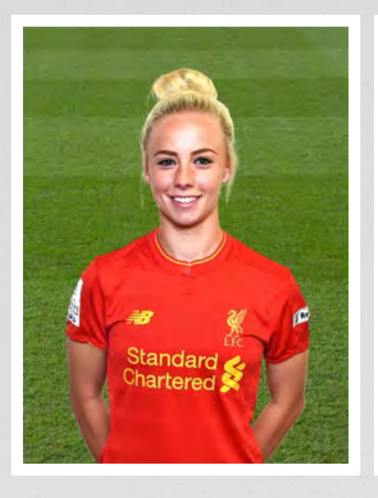
Beard had great faith in the teenage prospect and she contributed eleven appearances that season as Liverpool went on to retain the league title. Lifting that trophy was just one of several memorable matches for Ashley on her way to racking up 100 games for the Reds.

"I think there's quite a few, to be honest," she says. "Obviously winning

Words: William Hughes









the league in my first season was special and then going on to play in the UEFA Women's Champions League was a great experience.

"But I think the one that stands out for me most was coming back from the second cruciate injury of my career and scoring against MK Dons in the FA Cup [in February 2019]. I felt like that gave me the right boost to get back on the right track and get myself back in the team on a regular basis.

"On a personal level that was a big moment."

Her desire to get back on the pitch following that second long-term injury was testament to her character. Rehabilitation from such a situation can be a lonely experience, but Ashley impressed staff and team-mates with her mental strength and hard work to return to action as soon as possible.

"Those are obviously long injuries which are not good and I think when you do come back, it takes time. It always takes longer than you think to get back to being yourself, but I feel like I'm getting back in that place now.

"It's never easy when you are out for a long time but it is worth all the hard work when you get back out onto the grass with the rest of the girls."

In terms of other players who have been a big influence during her senior career, Ashley singles out two important figures from the back-to-back Women's Super League successes of 2013 and 2014.

Gemma Bonner was the captain of that team and is the only other Red to have made 100 appearances for the club since the advent of the FA WSL era in 2011. Meanwhile Fara Williams is England's most-capped international of all-time, representing her country on a remarkable 172 occasions.

"I would say that when I first came up to train with the senior team, the likes of Fara and Bonner had a big influence on me. Obviously when you first come up and you're a kid you always want to play and I feel like they helped me stay focused.

"Looking back, there were quite a few conversations that I had with Fara when I was looking to maybe go elsewhere to get more experience of playing and she kept me on the right track, explaining to me that things don't come overnight.

"Obviously I've stayed here and now I've got my 100th appearance for Liverpool which I'm delighted about and that's due to the players I've been with, the managers and staff and so on.

"I feel honoured because only Gemma has reached that milestone for the women so to be the second person to do so is a privilege."

Bonner went on to play 115 times for Liverpool before making the switch to Manchester City in 2018. It means Ashley could overtake her record by the end of the season but she prefers not to look too far ahead.

"Hopefully I've got many more years ahead so we'll see where it goes. For now I'm just looking forward to keeping going with the team, trying to keep the wins coming and hopefully going in the right direction.

"I've experienced a lot of change over the years but I feel that this team we have now is very together. We've all got the same goal and we all want to strive for the same thing, so hopefully we can keep pushing towards gaining promotion back to the Women's Super League."

After the disappointment of being relegated via points-per-game when the previous campaign was ended early, Ashley and her team-mates have made a bright start to life in the Championship.

Since being held to a 1-1 draw at home to Durham on the opening day – the game in which she brought up her century of appearances – the









I FEEL HONOURED BECAUSE ONLY GEMMA HAS REACHED THAT MILESTONE FOR THE WOMEN SO TO BE THE SECOND PERSON TO DO SO IS A PRIVILEGE

Reds have responded with wins over London Bees, Charlton Athletic and Coventry United to climb to the top of the table.

The 25-year-old has been showing her versatility by playing as an attacking full-back to cover an injury to regular right-back Becky Jane. It is typical of her willingness to help the team, but she typically plays down her selflessness.

"To be honest, if you're playing, you're playing – which is what every footballer wants. I want to do a job for the team and while Becks has been injured I've filled in there for her and hopefully she'll be back soon and we'll just see what comes from there.

"I think over the pre-season and playing the first few league games there, I've built a relationship with [winger] Mel [Lawley] playing behind her and hopefully we can keep pushing that on.

"We were disappointed with the first result when it ended in a draw but to be fair Durham gave us a good fight and we knew that they were going to be a difficult team to play. We've bounced back from that now and got two wins on the bounce so hopefully we can just keep going.

"Winning is a habit and when you get on a streak it often keeps coming. We've got to build on our performances and make sure we go back and look at the games and things that we can improve on because no game's ever perfect and we always want to improve."

After reaching her milestone appearance Ashley now hopes that her achievement will help inspire the next generation of youngsters in the club's academy.

"Liverpool is a special club and making 100 appearances is extra-special because I've come through the Academy and there aren't too many Academy graduates in the first-team. At the moment there is just myself and Bo Kearns who have played.

"For me to get to the stage where I am at maybe shows the younger players that they too can come through the Academy and then go on to make many, many appearances for the first-team."

DOING THE CONTINENTAL

The Reds kicked off a tough-looking Continental Cup [League Cup] campaign with a fully-deserved 3-1 victory over Manchester United at Prenton Park on 7 October. Vicky Jepson's side also face two other FA WSL clubs in Everton and Manchester City in their group games.

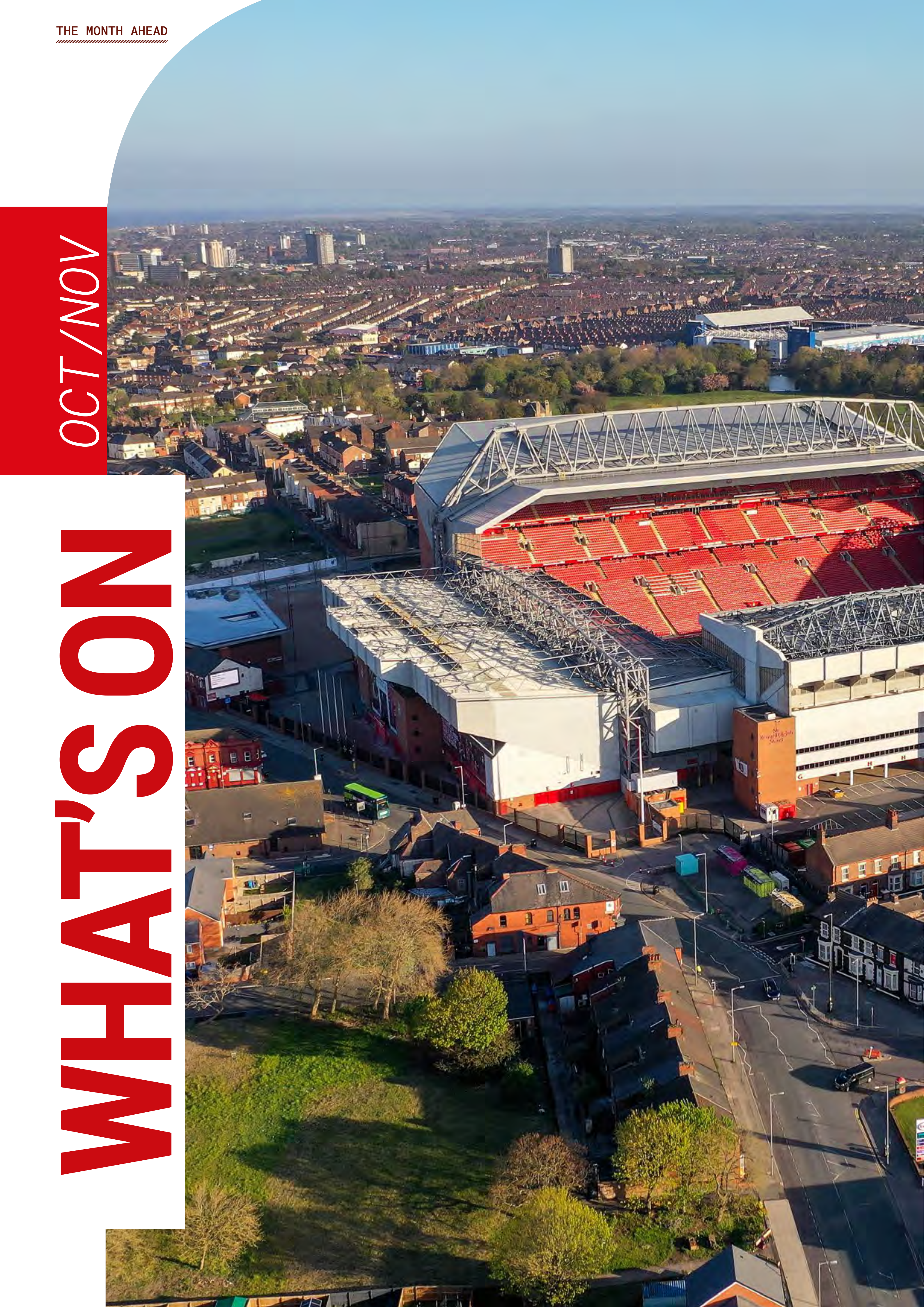
The Reds will welcome City to Wirral on 4 November before making the short trip to Walton Hall Park to face the Toffees on 18 November.

The top teams in the six qualifying groups will qualify for the quarter-finals, along with the two best runners-up.



WHAT'S ON

OCT/NOV





DERBY DAY

The latest instalment in English football's most-played derby takes place on Saturday 17 October, when Goodison Park stages the 203rd league encounter between Everton and Liverpool and the 237th clash of the Merseyside rivals overall.

The Blues have invested in their squad over the summer with midfielders Allan and Abdoulaye Doucoure and heralded winger James Rodriguez adding to the quality in Carlo Ancelotti's squad.

Liverpool put five goals past their rivals in last season's Premier League clash at Anfield and also knocked them out of the FA Cup before being held to a goalless draw across Stanley Park when the sides met in their first match following Project Restart in June.

The Reds are unbeaten in a record 19 league derbies with the Blues and will be aiming to make that 20 when the sides go head-to-head for the first time this season.

After the short trip across the park it's over the sea to the Netherlands and a first Champions League group game against Ajax on Wednesday 21 October – more of that over the page. Then come three Anfield fixtures in seven days: Sheffield United in the Premier League, FC Midtjylland in the Champions League, and West Ham United back in the Prem.

OCT/NOV

WHAT'S ON

BACK IN EUROPE



This season's Champions League group stage is being played over two periods of three successive midweek matchdays, with the first taking place from late October through to early November.

The opener in Amsterdam on Wednesday 21 October against Dutch champions Ajax is the first meeting between the clubs since December 1966. The next two games then see Liverpool play new opponents in European competition.

First up it's FC Midtjylland at Anfield on Tuesday 27 October when the Danish champions will become European opponents number 131. The following week Bergamo-based Atalanta make it 132 as the Reds look to win in Italy for the first time since December 2012 when Jordan Henderson's goal secured a 1-0 success at Udinese in a Europa League group game.

BIRTHDAYS

Bruce Grobbelaar 63 on 6 October

Trent Alexander-Arnold 22 on 7 October

Sami Hyypia 47 on 7 October

Xherdan Shaqiri 29 on 10 October

Niamh Fahey 33 on 13 October

Ben Woodburn 21 on 15 October

Leighton Clarkson 19 on 19 October

Sophie Bradley-Auckland 31 on 20 October

Chris Lawler 77 on 20 October

Ian Rush 59 on 20 October

Fabinho 27 on 23 October

Willie Stevenson 81 on 26 October



ALL THOSE YEARS AGO...

ANNIVERSARIES

10 years since FSG took ownership of the club on 15 October 2010

33 years since Ray Houghton joined the club on 19 October 1987

36 years since Ian Rush scored five against Luton Town on 29 October 1983

55 years since Liverpool defeated Juventus 2-0 in a European Cup Winners Cup tie at Anfield on 13 October 1965

98 years since Harry Chambers scored a hat-trick in a 5-1 derby win over Everton at Anfield on 7 October 1922

128 years since Matt McQueen and his brother Hugh made their debuts in LFC's first FA Cup tie at Anfield on 29 October 1892

And it's **5** years since the Reds drew 1-1 with Rubin Kazan at Anfield in Jürgen Klopp's first home match as manager on 22 October 2015...

Liverpool fans had to wait a fortnight from Jürgen Klopp's appointment before they saw their new manager inside the technical area at Anfield, and his opening night got off to a slow start as the Reds were held to a 1-1 draw by ten-man Rubin Kazan in a Europa League group game.

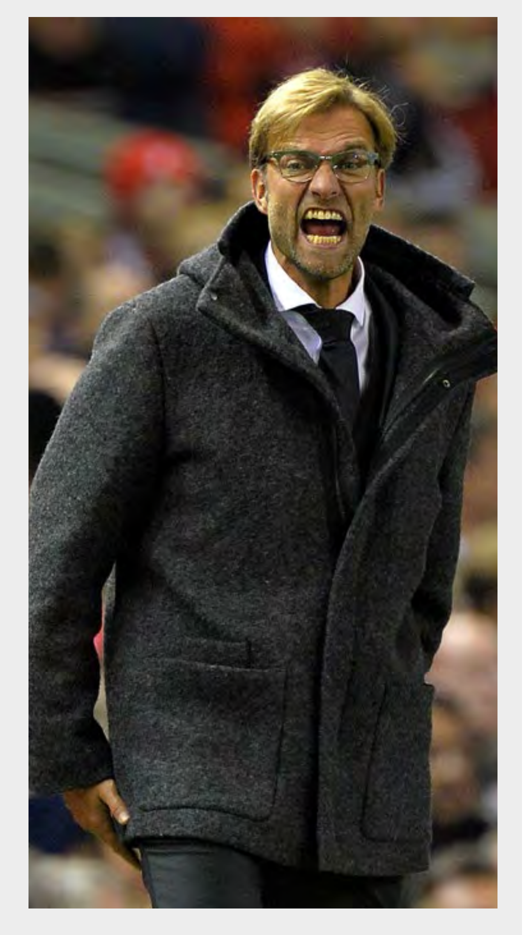
Klopp had seen it coming, even telling reporters at his pre-match press conference: "I hope that no-one is waiting for 3-0 after four minutes and is disappointed."

In fact it was the Russian visitors who scored the first goal of the Klopp era at Anfield with striker Marko Devic breaking the deadlock after a quarter-of-an-hour, skilfully beating Simon Mignolet after a clever piece of control from Oleg Kuzmin's pass.

However, Kuzmin was also involved in the incident which changed the game. Already cautioned for a foul on Alberto Moreno, the right-back dragged down Emre Can and collected a second yellow card for his troubles.

Liverpool rubbed salt into Kazan's wounds by equalising directly from the free-kick. Coutinho angled the ball in, Divock Origi – along with James Milner the only survivor from that night's starting line-up - headed it down across goal and Can was on hand to hook the ball over the line from close-range.

Klopp's side should have tasted victory but wasteful finishing and dogged defending conspired against them as Kazan's ten men stayed behind the ball to stem the red tide. Can should have added to his tally and Coutinho also squandered opportunities but it was substitute Christian Benteke who passed up two good late chances. First the big Belgian volleyed over from Nathaniel Clyne's cross and then he struck the post after being played in by Adam Lallana.

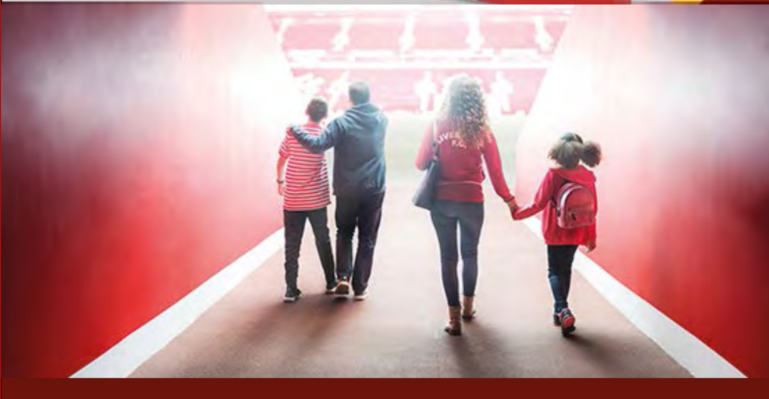






"HUGE SURPRISE, I WAS BLOWN AWAY!"

Tom Green, Reading









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PREMIER LEAGUE

CHAMPIONS

19|20

THE BOOK THAT BRINGS IT HOME

Last year we brought you *CH6MPIONS OF EUROPE*, the brilliant official book commemorating Liverpool's triumph in Madrid with a special scroll of honour inside for fans. This year's companion volume is all about the PREMIER LEAGUE CHAMPIONS – and once again supporters have the chance to be part of this unique piece of LFC history.

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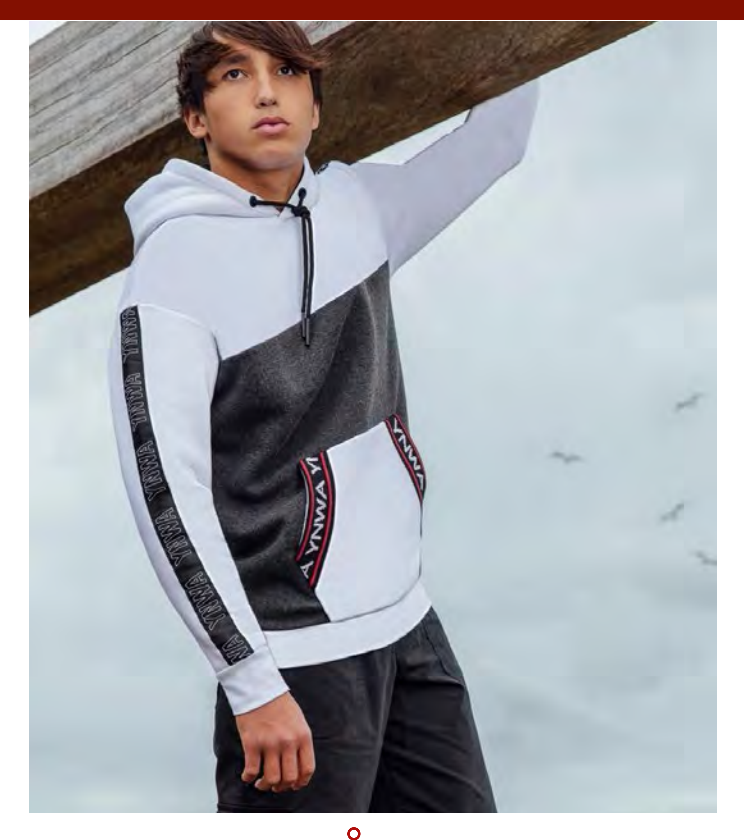
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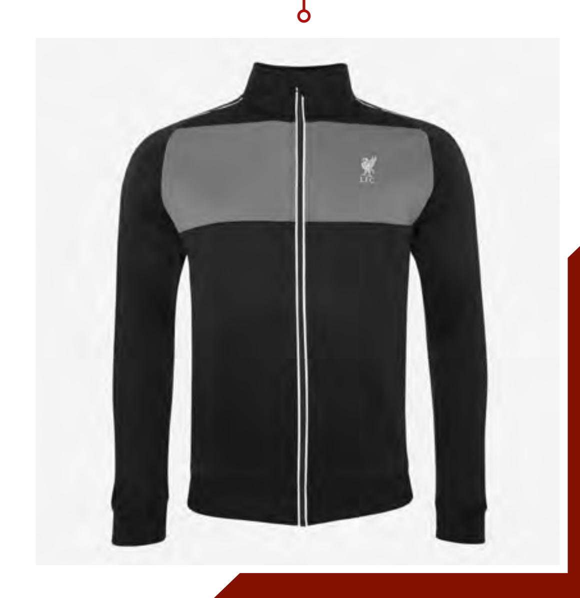
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Results & Fixtures 2020/21

		SCORE	TV	SCORERS
AUGUST				
Sat 29	Arsenal (CS, N)	1-1*	BT	Minamino (pens: Salah, Fabinho, Minamino, Jones)
SEPTEMBER				
Sat 12	**Leeds United (H)**	**4-3**	**Sky**	**Salah 3 (2 pens), Van Dijk**
Sun 20	Chelsea (A)	2-0	Sky	Mane 2
Thurs 24	Lincoln City (A, Carabao Cup 3)	7-2	Sky	Shaqiri, Minamino 2, Jones 2, Grujic, Origi
Mon 28	**Arsenal (H)**	**3-1**	**Sky**	**Mane, Robertson, Jota**
OCTOBER				
Thurs 1	**Arsenal (H, Carabao Cup 4)**	**0-0***	**Sky**	**(pens: Milner, Wijnaldum, Minamino, Jones)**
Sun 04	Aston Villa (A)	2-7	Sky	Salah 2
Sat 17	Everton (A, 12.30pm)		BT	
Wed 21	Ajax (UCL Matchday 1 A, 8pm)		BT	
Sat 24	**Sheffield United (H, 3pm)**			
Tue 27	**FC Midtjylland (UCL Matchday 2 H, 8pm)**		**BT**	
Sat 31	**West Ham United (H, 5.30pm)**		**Sky**	
NOVEMBER				
Tue 03	Atalanta (UCL Matchday 3 A, 8pm)		BT	
Sat 07	Manchester City (A)			
Sat 21	**Leicester City (H)**			
Wed 25	**Atalanta (UCL Matchday 4 H, 8pm)**		**BT**	
Sat 28	Brighton & Hove Albion (A)			
DECEMBER				
Tue 01	**Ajax (UCL Matchday 5 H, 8pm)**		**BT**	
Sat 05	**Wolverhampton Wanderers (H)**			
Wed 09	FC Midyjylland (UCL Matchday 6 A, 5.55pm)		BT	
Sat 12	Fulham (A)			
Wed 16	**Tottenham Hotspur (H)**			
Sat 19	Crystal Palace (A)			
Sat 26	**West Bromwich Albion (H)**			
Mon 28	Newcastle United (A)			
JANUARY				
Sat 02	Southampton (A)			
Sat 09	(FA Cup 3)			
Wed 13	**Burnley (H)**			
Sat 16	**Manchester United (H)**			
Sat 23	(FA Cup 4)			
Wed 27	Tottenham Hotspur (A)			
Sat 30	West Ham United (A)			
FEBRUARY				
Wed 03	**Brighton & Hove Albion (H)**			
Sat 06	**Manchester City (H)**			
Wed 10	(FA Cup 5)			
Sat 13	Leicester City (A)			
Tue/Wed 16/17	(UCL R of 16 1)		BT	
Sat 20	**Everton (H)**			
Tue/Wed 23/24	(UCL R of 16 1)		BT	
Sat 27	Sheffield United (A)			
MARCH				
Sat 06	**Fulham (H)**			
Tue 09/10	(UCL R of 16 2)		BT	
Sat 13	Wolverhampton Wanderers (A)			
Tue/Wed 16/17	(UCL R of 16 2)		BT	
Sat 20	**Chelsea (H)**			
Sat 20	(FA Cup 6)			
APRIL				
Sat 03	Arsenal (A)			
Tue 06/07	(UCL Q-F 1)		BT	
Sat 10	**Aston Villa (H)**			
Tue/Wed 13/14	(UCL Q-F 2)		BT	
Sat 17	Leeds United (A)			
Sat 17	(FA Cup S-F)			
Sat 24	**Newcastle United (H)**			
Tue/Wed 27/28	(UCL S-F 1)		BT	
MAY				
Sat 1	Manchester United (A)			
Tue/Wed 04/05	(UCL S-F 2)		BT	
Sat 08	**Southampton (H)**			
Tue 11	West Bromwich Albion (A)			
Sat 15	Burnley (A)			
Sat 15	(FA Cup final)			
Sun 23	**Crystal Palace (H)**			
Sat 29	(UCL final)		BT	







All fixtures subject to change. *lost 5-4 on pens



NEIL MELLOR

Thiago is a crucial signing, a player at the top of his game – one of the best in the world in his position. His personality will enhance the dressing-room dynamic

Liverpool could not have signed Thiago Alcantara from Bayern Munich without what Jürgen Klopp has achieved at the club.

Yes, the name Liverpool Football Club will always be one of the biggest in world football, but to attract the best players you must have a team they want to play in, and a manager they want to play for. Liverpool have both of those now.

Thiago is a crucial signing. He's a player at the top of his game – one of the best in the world in his position. That's why there has been so much excitement around his arrival.

Klopp signed Thiago from a major European rival, a team Liverpool will be competing against to win the Champions League. He hasn't left an average team to come here – he's left the European champions, one of the best teams around. It's very much a transfer coup.

Thiago does everything quickly. He sees things quicker, he does things quicker, he takes one touch when other players would take two. He constantly moves the ball very quickly and against teams that are organised, with a compact unit, you need someone to unlock the door. Thiago unlocks organised defensive units by using the ball quickly and accurately.

He'll be a player who has a lot of touches, Liverpool's go-to man, someone the team channels its play through because he brings a speed of ball when in possession.

Another bonus is that he can play both as a holding midfielder or further forward. In certain games he can be the conductor – the player who gets on the ball and dictates how Liverpool play. In other games Klopp will need the physicality of Fabinho to sit, be a destroyer and get the ball to Thiago further forward.

He has the flexibility to play in both roles because he is such a talented boy on the ball and when you think of the movement Liverpool have, the players will really enjoy his vision.

There will be a settling-in period. It doesn't matter how good a player is, they need time to adapt to their new environment. Thiago has never lived in England before, so he and his family must adjust to the culture, climate and lifestyle.

He also has to create an understanding with his new team-mates on the pitch. He needs to learn how and where Mo Salah, Roberto Firmino and Sadio Mane like the ball, but the best players in the world learn such things very quickly. I envisage Thiago adjusting well because he is such an intelligent player but also because of his personality and background.

There have been comparisons between Thiago and my former Liverpool team-mate Xabi Alonso. Xabi was exceptional on the ball, but he also understood the city of Liverpool and the people very well because of his Spanish background. I can see something similar happening with Thiago, that his personality will enhance the dynamic in what is already a strong dressing-room environment.

Diogo Jota has also arrived from Wolves, but there will need to be more patience as he settles in. Jota will get goals and create chances, but he also has an established front-three ahead of him and will need to learn what is expected of him in Klopp's style of football.

A bit like when Mane and Salah first signed for Liverpool, Jota now has the platform to become a top-class player. He has room for improvement and the opportunity to try to get to the levels they have both reached.



Getting his first Liverpool goal so quickly against Arsenal will help. Every attacking player at a new club wants to get that first goal off their back. Not only for confidence but to stop not scoring playing on their mind.

If you haven't scored for four, five, six games then, as much as you try to blank it out, the noises start to get louder and have some kind of impact. Jota won't hear any of that noise now.

Ultimately, the arrival of both players makes Liverpool stronger. Yes, there was a wake-up call with the 7-2 defeat at Aston Villa, but I still feel the confidence and belief gained by winning the Premier League, in addition to Thiago and Jota arriving, means the Reds are again genuine title contenders.

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